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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Impact of School System, Teaching and Assessment on Female Students' Dropout in Nepal

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**IMPACT OF SCHOOL SYSTEM,
TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT
ON FEMALE STUDENTS'
DROPOUT
IN NEPAL**

TANKA PRASAD DAHAL

Impact of School System, Teaching and Assessment on Female Students' Dropout in Nepal

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the candidate, Mr Tanka prasad Dahal is the author of the thesis presented herein; that, unless otherwise stated, all references cited have been consulted by the candidate; that the work of which the thesis is a record has been done by the candidate, and that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

Signature:



Date: 24 January, 2018

All conditions stated within the Ordinance and Regulations of the University of Dundee have been strictly adhered to and fulfilled by the candidate, Mr Tanka Prasad Dahal.

Supervisors' Signatures:

1. Prof Keith Topping:



Date: 24 Jan 2018

2. Dr Susan Levy:



Date: 24 Jan 2018

Abstract

This thesis investigated factors within the school system, in the family and in the wider socio-cultural context that affected female students' dropping out from schooling in Nepal. This research was important because Nepal is a highly gendered culture. Education for males is considered more valuable than that for females. Nepal ranks second highest in the world on an index of preference for sons (Maharjan, 2013). The completion of primary school rate for girls is only 51.7 percent (School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal, 2010).

A systematic search strategy sought previous relevant studies. The criteria were that they must have a focus on school dropout in Nepal, on gender or girl students' schooling, on the school system or curriculum, on educational policy in relation to female dropout or dropout in general, on factors that caused girl students' dropout in Nepal, or on girl students' dropout anywhere in the world with a similar socio-cultural context analogous to Nepal. They must also contain significant data. From 3308 titles only 24 studies were selected, as only a small number were methodologically sound. The review revealed a wide range of issues within school, home and community. A gap in the literature was that no study focused solely on the effect of the educational system on female students' school retention or dropout in Nepal.

This research utilised the concept of inter-subjectivity to capture the multiplicity of perspectives on the phenomenon of female students' dropout. It used both qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering data. The participants were selected from seven categories – District Education Office (DEO) staff, head teachers, teachers, students in school, students who dropped out, parents of students in school and parents of students who dropped out from school. Random sampling, purposive and snowballing methods were used. The respondents were selected from six districts in three ecological regions: the mountains, the hills and the terai. In-depth interviews were conducted with 96 respondents and surveys were administered to

570 respondents to incorporate a more objective dimension. Both measures took 20 – 30 minutes to complete, although a few interviews took longer than 30 minutes.

A large number of issues emerged from the data. These findings were consolidated in three interacting models: the educational-exclusion model, the economic-political-exclusion model and the socio-cultural-exclusion model. The educational-exclusion model included the findings that the educational spaces of public schools reinforced discrimination against female students because there was a lack of safety systems and space for maintaining female students' privacy, no separate teaching for students with different abilities, poor implementation of educational policy such as the continuous assessment system (CAS) and not enough female teachers in schools. The economic-political-exclusion model incorporated findings related to poverty (family economy) and under-funded schools, and also issues of excess politicisation in educational administration and public schools. The socio-cultural-exclusion model found issues of prejudice over girls' education, early marriage, parents' superstitious beliefs, the effect of the caste system, the effect of dowry, and lack of awareness among parents about the value of education for both sons and daughters. This latter model also showed the impact of gender bias against daughters, patriarchal family norms and internal and external migration.

Many of the findings of this study confirmed the findings of the previous literature: factors related to family economy, parental awareness, parental education and gender discrimination, and factors from the school system such as school amenities, pupil-teacher ratio, examinations and effect of the teaching system on female students. But this study also uncovered unique issues not revealed by the literature: the negative impact of CAS, the effect of the lack of teacher accountability, the effect of over-politicisation in educational institutions, the effect of superstitious beliefs and the effects of the dowry system.

A major limitation is that during the fieldwork people were recovering from a disastrous earthquake trauma. Consequently, only one school in a district was selected for data gathering. Two or more schools would have given urban/rural

variation within each district. Likewise, a large number of students were involved in survey but the number of respondents in other categories was small and dropped-out students were barely involved owing to recruitment difficulties.

This research indicates a need for substantial restructuring in the education system in Nepal. There are needs for an inclusive school environment, teachers with skills to implement the new methods of teaching required by the official curriculum, a fairer assessment system in practice, a proper support and safety system, differentiated teaching for students with different abilities, greater availability of library and other independent study facilities, better teacher-student ratios, increased parental involvement and regular parent-school communication. The respondents said that the government should allocate additional funding for additional resources. In the future researchers should focus on how public schools could function independent of political involvement and how their spaces could be inclusive for both male and female students from different family backgrounds. Intervention studies would be particularly valuable.

Abbreviations

SMC – School Management Committee

SSRP – School Sector Reform Plan

DEO – District Education Office

MOE- Ministry of Education

RP – Resource Person

CDC – Curriculum Development Centre

NESP - National Education System Plan

ERDP - Education for Rural Development Plan

BPEP - Basic Primary Education Programmes

EFA - Education for All

PEP – Primary Education Project

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF - United International Children’s Emergency Fund

UNESCO - United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

JICA - Japan International Co-operation Agency

DANIDA - Danish International Development Agency

MWCSW - Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare

ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development

Glossary

Niji shrot – funding managed with own resources

Rahat – teachers who are funded by some donor agencies

Darbandi – teaching position

Terai – Plains

Kothi – brothel

Himali – mountainous

Yarsagumba (*Cordyceps sinensis*) - Ophiocordyceps sinensis is a fungus that parasitizes larvae of ghost moths and produces a fruiting body valued as an herbal remedy found in mountainous regions of India, Nepal and Tibet (definition from Wikipedia)

Rudraksha - *Rudraksha* beads are the seeds of the *Rudraksha* fruit obtained from *Rudraksha* trees.

Muda – Stools made of bamboo. They are made locally in eastern Nepal and sold for cash.

Mela – a seasonal fair

Dohori – A folk song, a conversational duet

arkako ghar jane jaat - those who ultimately go to other's houses meaning their husband's houses.

Pidit – a sufferer

Manusmriti – known as Manu's laws, this book prescribes a set of obligations, incumbent in Hindu's caste system

Chhori – daughter

Buhari – Daughter in law

Adivasi Janajatis – Indigenous ethnic group of people

Jand – Home-made liquor

Khalasi – In public buses one who works as a driver's assistant, a gates man

Niguro – Tendrils or stems of a fern plant used as green vegetable in Nepal

Bhatti – Local liquor shop

Madhesi – Natives of indigenous people of the plains of Nepal

Janma kundali – Horoscope

Dalit – A marginalised ethnic group of people. A low caste group according to Hindu hierarchy

Jyotisi – one who foretells people's future looking at their horoscope

Dohori – Folk song that contains two sides who have a singing debate. The songs contain questions and quick witty answers.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

This study aims to find why female students dropout from high schools in Nepal with a focus on the effect of the school system. The phenomenon of dropout is a complex educational problem in Nepal and in many parts of the world. In Nepal, female participation in education is improving but the issue of school retention is still a serious issue and needs special attention. This study intends to expand knowledge regarding the issue, which will help future educational policy makers in addressing the problem.

1.1 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter one provides the socio-cultural, educational and political context of Nepal where this study is based. This chapter includes the rationale for the study's focus on female students' dropout and the researcher's personal and professional motivation. Chapter two presents a systematic literature review which intends to find the extent to which previous studies have addressed the issue of girl students' dropout in Nepal and other parts of the world. The details of the review show how this study has gained insight from a gap in the previous studies.

Chapter three presents the methodology. It includes research design, theoretical framework, sampling, data collection procedure, the challenges that the researcher faced during the fieldwork, issues related to research ethics and the analytical framework appropriate to the data.

Chapters four, five and six discuss the findings of this research. Chapter four and five incorporate the findings of qualitative interviews and chapter six includes findings of the survey questionnaire. Chapter four includes all the findings about school system. This chapter highlights the effect of policy implementation issues, lack of government funding and school infrastructural issues, low motivation of teachers and students, poor implementation of the assessment system and excessive politicising in schools. Likewise, chapter five discusses the findings on socio-cultural factors. This chapter

highlights the effect of domestic barriers, economic and cultural barriers against female students' schooling.

Chapter six includes the findings of the analysis of the survey responses. The responses include the participant's general perception of female education, female students' dropout, issues related to the school system and issues related to socio-cultural factors. Chapter seven, the final chapter, includes discussion and conclusion. This chapter compares and contrasts the findings from the qualitative and quantitative data, relates the findings of this study to the findings of the previous studies and highlights the contribution of this research. In addition, this chapter also discusses the practical implications of this research.

1.2 School Education and Dropout: Context

The problem of school dropout in Nepal cannot be linked to a single cause and geographical region. It is prevalent across the country and not limited to a group of people. It should be viewed in a wider historical context of the country and the context of the current education system. It is also important to consider the diversity of the geographical and socio-cultural variation within Nepal and how the current education policy functions.

A vast population in the country is living in poverty. The distribution of development is unequal across the country. The public-private school educational dichotomy signifies a class difference in terms of educational access and retention. Wealthy people choose to educate their children in English medium private schools, and normally, economically lower-class people send their children to public schools.

The Ministry of Education's report of 2012-2013 reveals that only 69.4 percent of the students enrolled in grade one reach grade eight (MOE, 2013). This trend of dropout continues to higher grades (see appendix 5.3 for district-wise dropout rates). This suggests a big loss of government investment in building schools, recruiting teachers,

training them and building school infrastructure. According to the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/2011, 34 percent of the population aged six years and above never attended school.

According to a study, 'Holistic Adolescent Development in Nepal', conducted in 15 districts of mid- western, far-western and the Terai region of Nepal by UNICEF in 2013-2014, the school dropout rate among adolescent girls was found greater than that of boys despite the financial support provided to girls (Amin et al., 2014). The study found that educational opportunities in the area were comparatively recent, as 85% of respondents' mothers and 45% of respondents' fathers had no education, and a higher proportion of younger adolescents aged 10-14 attended school compared to adolescents aged 15-19'(*Ibid.*).

Despite efforts made by the government and several international agencies, the educational access and retention of female students has been a challenge. The discrepancy in male-female literacy is still something that needs policy attention. Gender and in many parts of the country caste are dimensions that are affecting literacy inequality (Maddox and Esposito, 2013) and consequently inequality in schooling outcome. Both male and female students drop out from both primary and secondary schools. Females encounter more barriers than males because of the patriarchal structure of the social and family system. Therefore, more studies should focus on female education and female retention in schools.

1.3 Research Background and Motivation

The socio-cultural context in which I grew up and had my school level education led me to inquire about the phenomenon of school dropout. In my family, we were five brothers and four sisters. Three brothers had a university level education. Two brothers had high school level education. Only one sister got through high school, but she did not go to university. The reason was that my father died early and my elder brothers and mother did not consider girls' education important. On the other

hand, my sisters did not have any motivation for studies because they were told that education was no use for them and their job in the future would be to take care of children and do the household work. Only one sister graduated from high school - after she failed the school leaving examinations twice. By then she was already married off and was living with her husband's family. She then did not go to college and dropped out of education.

Similarly, in my neighbourhood many girls did not graduate from school. One was a Brahmin family. Mr Brahmin had three wives, all without education. He had no children. The Chhetri family across the river had three daughters. The eldest was married and without education. The younger daughters went to the same school I went to. Both dropped out before they reached seventh grade. The Gautam family had three daughters and two sons. None of the daughters and sons completed high school education. Mr and Mrs Gautam wanted to educate their sons but both sons lacked motivation. They were low performers and failed grade promotion examinations repeatedly. The Gautams did not wish their daughter to be educated.

My grandpa's house was next to Mr Gautam's house. I had two paternal uncles and two aunts. Both uncles were past school age and uneducated when I was doing my schooling, but the aunts were still going to school. The aunts dropped out of school at sixth and seventh grade and got married.

In all those cases it was obvious that parents and guardians preferred the son's education and did not pay any attention to their daughters'. However, equally important was the school's role. The school in our catchment area did not make any effort to keep these students at school. There was no communication between parents and school. When daughters stopped going to school, the head teacher and teachers never tried to find the reason. There was no system in the school to deal with student dropout. The school took it as normal and did nothing.

Another motivation I have had is what I witnessed as a teacher. After I did my bachelor's degree, I started teaching. During my professional teaching career of over

15 years, I saw several students disappearing mid-way through their schooling. I worked in the eastern region in Itahari, in Chitwan, a district in the western region, in Kathmandu valley and in Sanga (a hill village in the outskirts of Kathmandu). In all cases, adolescent females were those who dropped out most.

1.4 Rationale for Focusing on Female Students

The first rationale for choosing female students' school dropout as the focus of this study is based on the gender gap on literacy rates. According to the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2011 the overall literacy rate is 65.9%. However, the separate figures for male and female reveal a gap in the literacy rates: male - 75.1%, female - 57.4% (NBS, 2012).

Various studies carried out in this area reveal that the root of this discrepancy between male and female literacy lies in female children's school enrolment. The problem also lies in the unequal distribution of development within the kingdom and social class and caste stratification (Rothchild 2005, Levine 2006, Stash & Hannum 2001, Mohanraj 2010, Jain 2006).

Maharjan (2013) states that Nepal ranks second highest on the world index of preference for sons. According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (2014) Nepal is ranked 112 out of 142 countries (WEF, 2014). The School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal 2010 consolidated report, said that the dropout of girl students in government-funded primary schools is 48.3 percent, whereas their net enrolment is 93.6 percent. The completion rate of the five-year primary school cycle for girls is 51.7 percent.

Some news stories of real incidents that appeared in the national newspaper at different times during the course of my research prove the rationale for this study. The first incident was a tragic one, which read:

'Four teenage schoolgirls committed suicide "en masse", jumping into the Mahakali river at Dattu VDC in the district on Monday. The girls, sixth and seventh graders at Rastriya Higher Secondary School, jumped into the river after they failed the annual exam, said police. Nitu Lohar (13) and Mamata Chunara (14) of Dattu-2, and Mamata Chunara (13) and Pooja Koli (14) of Dattu-3 jumped into the river near Udai, about 21km southwest of the district headquarters, Darchula Khalanga. The school made public its results on Monday. The locals suspect that the girls might have committed suicide, fearing backlash from their families. Rajesh Singh Samanta, the school headmaster, said that three of the suicide victims failed the final exam.' (Badu, 2015)

The second news story revealed that students were expelled from school for getting married. The story read:

'A school administration here in the district has expelled two students from the school. Mirkot-based Tribeni Secondary School expelled two of its 10th grade students--Yogendra Kunwar and Samjhana Rana-- for marrying. A meeting of the School Management Committee decided to expel them from school. Both the students are extremely worried following the decision of the school as problems on their educational future loom. Chundamani Adhikari, principle of the school, clarified that the School Management Committee had made this decision back in 2012 and they have just implemented the decision.' (Sapkota, 2016)

The following story brings a sad picture of forced child marriage. This was caused by the dowry system. The story went:

'While kids her age are just getting enrolled in primary school, six-year-old Shila Kumari Malli, a girl from the impoverished Dom community of Chandranigahapur in Rautahat district is already married. At an age when one does not even understand what marriage means, she was forcibly married off to Bikesh Malli, 8, son of Binod Malli of Ganjabhawanipur in Bara two years ago. Shila's father Kailash Malli said he married off his daughter at such a young age as he would not have to give a large dowry to the groom's side for an underage bride. "I married off my daughter early because I cannot afford to give a large dowry," he said, adding that he had only to give a bicycle and Rupees 7,000 in cash to the groom's side as per the ancient practice of providing a girl with a dowry at her marriage. He said that he threw a small

wedding party for his daughter in order to appease the groom's side and those attending the marriage procession. According to Dharmendra Paswan of the District Dalit Network, Rautahat, an NGO working for the rights of Dalit people, child marriage and the dowry system is going on unabated in the district, depriving girls of their liberty and fundamental rights.' (TKP Report, 2014)

1.5 Nepal: An Overview of Country Profile

The history of modern Nepal dates back to late eighteenth century when Prithvi Narayan Shah, the king of a hill kingdom Gorkha some eighty miles west of Kathmandu, brought under his control a number of tiny states in the Himalayan foothills and adjoining strip of the North Indian plain (Whelpton, 2005) . Prithvi Narayan Shah and his troops captured Kathmandu and its neighbouring kingdoms: Patan and Bhaktapur and became the ruler of the entire Kathmandu valley and beyond (Bhattarai, 2008). 'He declared Kathmandu the capital of a greater and increasingly unified Nepal' (*Ibid.*, p 37). The Rana Rule began with Jung Bahadur Rana, who had joined the army in 1832 at the age of 16 (*Ibid.*). He took advantage of the power struggle in the royal court after the death of Prithvi Narayan Shah. Jung Bahadur was an ambitious army man who rose to the position of supreme army leader of the Royal court through the infamous coup called *Kota Parba*. He then declared himself prime minister with absolute power (Shrestha and Bhattarai, 2003). The Ranas were ministers to the kings. 'By the mid-nineteenth century, Jung Bahadur had established a hereditary regime that would place Nepal in the grips of a family dictatorship for more than 100 years' (Bhattarai, 2008, p 40). Throughout this period the kings became the Rana prime ministers' puppets.

Nepal is a landlocked, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious country. Nepal shares her borders with India in the east, south and west, and with China in the north. Nepal occupies 147,181 square kilometres of area and has a population of 31 million with 24 percent of the population in poverty and 83 percent of the population living

in a rural area (CBS, 2016). According to the Asian Development Bank Report (2013), the figure of 24 percent was measured against the national poverty line of NRs19,261 per capita per year. In addition, 'there is an enormous disparity in rural-urban poverty, 35% in rural areas compared to 10% in urban areas' (Bhattarai, 2016).

Geographically, Nepal has three ecological zones: the Lowlands (Terai), the Midlands (hills) and the Highlands (Himalayas). These three zones have their own distinctive geographical and living conditions. There is an unequal distribution of educational, health and transport facilities.

According to the last census of 2011 by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of the Government of Nepal, 'there are 123 spoken languages. Similarly, 125 castes and ethnic groups of people live in the country. The country has been divided into 14 administrative zones, 57 districts and further smaller units such as village development committees, municipalities, sub-metropolis and metropolis' (CBS, 2016).

The civil war waged by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPNM) for a decade ended in 2006 after dialogue and an agreement with the major political parties on forming a new constitution by a constituent assembly. The major political parties and the CPNM together led a historical movement against the king who then held the absolute power. This culminated in a peace accord which paved the way for the election of the constituent assembly.

In 'May 2008, the constituent assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of the abdication of the Nepali monarch Gyanendra Shah and the establishment of a federal democratic republic' (Bhattarai, 2016). This marked the end of 240 years of monarchy. 'The present constitution of Nepal has provision to elect a President from the parliament who is the chief of the country. The prime minister in the cabinet holds the executive power of the state elected by the parliament' (CBS, 2016).

1.6 Historical Background of Education in Nepal

Before modern education came into effect in the fifties, in the past throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Sanskrit was the only means of education. Prime Minister Ranodip Singh established the *Sanskrit Pradhan Pathshala* around 1877 (Shrestha, 2010). The main purpose of such schooling was to produce priests and to preserve Sanskrit culture. It was followed by more Sanskrit schools in Dang, Dingla, Janakpur, and Kathmandu.

Until 1951 education was almost non-existent in Nepal (Wood, 1959). It was limited to a handful of elites that included the members of the royal family and the Ranas. The Ranas' family influence lasted for 104 years. The oligarchs adopted a policy of keeping general people away from educational access. 'The King was reduced to being a "religious and ceremonial figurehead", with the Rana family taking not only the hereditary Prime Ministership but also dominating army and civil government positions. The regime adopted isolationist positions both in terms of the contact between the state and the international community and in regard to intra-state relations (Caddel, 2007).'

Education was viewed with suspicion and mistrust whenever it was linked to the general population. But the Ranas felt a need of education for themselves and their children because they wanted their children to be competent in cross-country dealings. This situation paved the way to funding the first school. The first school, Darbar High School, was built in 1854 but the access was restricted to members of Rana family (Graner, 1998). The evolution of education in Nepal, therefore, has a brief history. By 1951 there were only 321 primary schools with 8500 students for the country's population of eight million (Shrestha, 1988). Similarly, there were 11 high-schools, two colleges and one technical education institution (Shrestha, 2010). When the Rana's rule ended, the country's overall literacy rate was only five percent: male literacy ten percent and female literacy one percent (Shah, 2016).

With the formation of the new democratic government, the country's doors were opened to the world and a move towards mass education began in the 1950's. The first most important event was the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1951, which adopted a constitution that made education a right for every Nepalese citizen (Stash and Hannum, 2001). A number of educational development initiatives have taken place since then. The most important among them were the 'National Education System Plan (NESP) introduced in 1973 and the Education for Rural Development Plan (ERDP) introduced during the 1980s' (Basnet, 2013).

NESP 'recommended free primary education' and 'made significant achievements in terms of the expansion of primary schooling opportunities and uniform curriculum and textbooks for comprehensive school education from grades one to ten' (Bhattarai, 2016). Likewise, ERDP aimed 'to develop a system of basic education that would serve to promote rural development in Nepal, initially on an experimental basis in the Seti Zone, with a view to its eventual adoption throughout the country' (UNESCO, 1994). Through ERDP the Nepal government expanded the educational opportunities of the general population, utilising the 'external resources of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for the first time in Nepal' (Bhattarai, 2016).

These initiatives brought a significant outcome. Based on them more programmes such as the Basic Primary Education Programmes (BPEP), Education for All (EFA), and Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) were also launched. For these projects the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Nepal obtained financial support from the World Bank (WB), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF. All these plans and interventions adopted by the country helped to move towards 'a sector- wide approach for a comprehensive development of education' (Basnet, 2013).

Demand for equal opportunity in educational participation and quality education is now increasing every year in Nepal. The government has currently implemented the

School Sector Reform Plan SSRP (2009-2015) to address such demands. The SSRP aims to restructure the school system to consist of two levels: basic and primary level (grades one to eight) and secondary level (grades nine to twelve). The SSRP has been devised 'in accordance with the principles and provisions of the EFA National Plan of Action (2001-2015)' and aims to achieve equity in education, enhance quality of education and improve the efficiency of educational institutions (Bhattarai, 2016).

During all these times since the fifties, the Nepal government has suffered severely from the lack of financial resources and has depended heavily on foreign aid. Today, 'the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are the major multilateral donors, and Japan is the largest bilateral donor' (Acharya and Acharya, 2004, Khanal et al., 2008, cited in Timsina, 2011). For that reason, educational policies in Nepal have sought to incorporate the 'interests and expectations of donor agencies' (Caddel, 2007 in Timsina, 2011).

Besides these steps, there are some significant legal provisions that the government has introduced since the nineties to try to ensure gender parity and to eliminate discrimination at different times. The 1990 constitution adopted an equality provision in article 12(2) which stated: 'No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, or ideological conviction, or any of them' (Tuladhar and Bhandari, 2015). Another important move towards empowering females was the establishment of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW) in 1995 in line with the proposals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Since its establishment the ministry 'has actively given due focus to mainstream gender in national development plans, policies, and programmes; advocating women's empowerment and gender equality' (Basnet, 2013).

Although the government has adopted several legal and policy level provisions and although international agencies have provided a good supply of financial aid, studies show that problems still exist. The problem of inequality in educational gain,

employment and participation in socio-economic development programmes still persists.

1.7 Caste System, Gender and Literacy

Nepali society is basically caste-based society where people from different castes and ethnic groups live together in various compositions. Everyone is aware of what caste he or she belongs to and are aware of other's identity. Although the current legislation has outlawed any kind of discrimination, caste-based hierarchies discriminate people in terms of their educational and economic opportunities. 'The caste system, a social stratification emerging from the Hindu tradition, is closely interwoven with ethnicity in Nepal'. The *Muluki Ain* (the National Civil Code) of 1854, which introduced caste system in Nepal, 'defines caste in terms of ritual "purity" and "pollution"; it places Brahmans in the highest ranks of the hierarchy and Dalits in the lowest. Other ethnic groups, the Adivasi Janajati, are placed in the middle' (Neupane, 2016, p.68).

According to 2011 population census of Nepal 'all four so called high caste ranking Hindu groups of the Tarai, such as the Maithil Brahmin, Kayastha, Rajput and Dev have the highest literacy rates' (CBS, 2011, p. 16). On the other hand, 'the most deprived groups in terms of education are the Tarai Dalits or untouchables. Of them, the lowest literacy rates are recorded by the Dom in the 2011 Census, followed by Musahar, Natwa, Kori, Dushad and Chamar. Out of 15 Tarai Dalits groups, six Tarai Dalits have the lowest literacy rates' (*Ibid.* p.16).

The data above provides a glimpse of an influence of caste in educational access. Similar disparities are among gender and caste groups at local and regional level. According to Nepal Demographic and Health Survey Hill/Mountain women are nearly twice as likely to be literate as Tarai/Madhesi women (63 percent compared with 36 percent, respectively) (NDHS, 2006). Likewise, 'the literacy level of Tarai-origin women is so low that, with the exception of Muslims, the largest gender gaps in literacy are also found among the Tarai/Madhes origin groups. Among the Madhesi Other Castes, men are three times as likely to be literate as women (72

percent versus 24 percent), and among all Tarai/Madhes-origin groups men are twice as likely to be literate as women (70 percent versus 36 percent)' (*Ibid.* p. 8). Future studies need to pay attention to these issues.

1.8 Political Instability and Education

Nir and Kafle (2013) argue that 'political stability' is 'essential to enable professional considerations to dominate educational processes and allow educators to conduct pedagogical programs from start to finish'. Nepal achieved a democratic system of governance after the popular movement in 1990. But it turned out to be the end of the stable governance the country needed. The major political parties were soon bogged down in inter-party and intra-party feuds and political alienation took an extreme form in the case of the Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (CPNM), which launched an armed struggle in 1996 that 'continued to strike mortal wounds to the fabric of the society for almost a decade' (Osmani and Bajracharya, 2007, p. 2). The schools were used for insurgents' shelters in remote parts of the country and school children were forced to join the insurgents' army.

The political turmoil was further aggravated by the infamous royal carnage in June, 2001, in which the then king Birendra Shah, his whole family and other members of the royal family were murdered. The king's only brother Gyanendra Shah who survived the carnage became the new king. This not-so-popular king eventually 'dismissed the coalition government, suspended democracy and civil liberties, and assumed absolute political power in 2005' (Osmani and Bajracharya, 2007, p.2). This brought all the political parties, including the most radical CPNM, to fight against the absolute monarch.

A historical movement against the king resulted in reinstating the dissolved parliament. The reinstated parliament not only reduced the king's power, but also abolished the monarchy. Even after that political turmoil did not see any respite. No party secured a majority in the 2008 general election although the Maoists secured the largest number of seats (Reynolds, 2011). Since then a number of 'short-lived'

governments have come to power. Reynolds found that education did not get the attention it deserved. 'The country's political problems' overshadowed other priorities (*Ibid.*).

The political instability caused slow economic growth and slow economic growth crippled the country's developmental programmes including education (Osmani and Bajracharya, 2007). School dropout is one of the problems that school education has to face. Dropout of male and female students is linked to the status of the economy: the family economy at a basic level and the national economy in a broader context.

Before going into further depth about the school dropout and researching the factors causing it, it is important to conceptualise 'dropout'. The following section includes a discussion about the meaning of dropout in different contexts and the concept of dropout that this study supports.

1.9 Conclusion

Female students' dropout from high school is a serious problem all over Nepal. The educational statistics show that some parts have the most serious problems, whereas some other part have less (see Appendix 3.5). A number of previous studies have explored gender inequality and discrimination caused by the patriarchal attitude in the socio-cultural context of Nepal but not enough attention has been directed toward educational factors in relation to female students' school attainment. This study intends to fill that gap and provide insights for the future educational policy makers for addressing the problem of female students' dropout.

This chapter has provided a chapter-wise summary of the thesis and a broad overview of the Nepalese context in which this study took place. The research background includes the researcher's family circumstances and the biographical and professional experience that worked as a strong factor for motivation. The chapter has also explained the rationale for focusing on female students' dropout. In addition, the chapter has included a brief overview of the country's geographical and

historical context and a glance at evolution of education in Nepal. It has also shown how the education sector has suffered because of prolonged political instability in the country. The chapter has ended with a brief discussion on the concept and process of dropout.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Access to basic education for all children has been an area of concern for the educationalists and policy makers in Nepal. Despite Nepal government's efforts with the programme like Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), the current literacy rate poses a challenge. According to National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2011 the overall literacy rate is 65.9%. The separate figures for male and female reveal a fair amount of gap in the literacy rates: male - 75.1%, female - 57.4% (NBS, 2012).

It is important to examine female children's access to education and attainment in the broader context of the educational initiations taken by the UNESCO and the commitments and efforts made by the government of Nepal. Following the UNESCO's Jomtien World Education Conference, 1990, which adopted 'World Declaration on Education for All', the Nepal Government framed a National Plan of Action (NPA) in 1991. In 1992 a provision of placement of at least one female teacher in each school was adopted. Since then, the Nepalese government has taken several steps. The Education for All (EFA) programme in Nepal aimed 'to ensure basic education of quality for all children, particularly girls, *dalits*, disabled and children in difficult circumstances and children belonging to ethnic minorities, through free and compulsory primary education in Nepal by 2015' (CERID, 2009).

In spite of the steps taken by the government, there is a need for bridging the gender gap in terms of access to education and school attainment. 'Nepal is a country characterized by persistent poverty, slow economic growth, and wide differences in school attainment between girls and boys (Acharya, 1979). Shrestha et al. (1986) point out another important aspect of the issue: 'topography may be a powerful determinant in Nepal. With a highly dispersed rural population, comparatively few school buildings, and terrain that may be the most rugged in the world, the distance a child must travel to school is no small consideration.'

2.2 Conceptualising Dropout

The nature and causes of school dropout vary from place to place. Perceptions about how it occurs also differ from person to person. Before moving ahead with the study of female students' dropout in Nepal, it is important to make the concept of dropout clear.

The definition of dropout is contextual and controversial. Some educational practitioners consider a temporary break in study also a dropout for that period, whereas others consider dropout as a permanent pull-out from education.

The Oxford dictionary defines dropout as a student who leaves high school without achieving any academic qualifications or without completing the course of study necessary to graduate. Witte et al. (2013) define dropout as leaving education without obtaining a minimal credential. Similarly, Bonneau (2015) draws on the context of North Carolina and defines dropout as a student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school.

Larsen et al. (2013) perceives dropout in two models: one that occurs when the students are pushed by the features within the institution, and the other that occurs when the students are pulled by the features outside of the institution. This does not offer a clear idea of what dropout is but suggests models that account for why dropout may occur.

Lamb & Markussen (2011) state that the term drop out is mainly used in Canada and United States to refer to students who leave school without gaining a high school diploma. Different terms such as 'early school leaving', 'not in education' and so on are used in different contexts to address the issue of student dropout. Lamb and Markessen (2011) provide definitions of dropout used in 13 different countries. Most of the countries use similar criteria to decide whether a student is a dropout. The

definitions present ‘a shared understanding’ that a student who has not gained a high school qualification and is not in education is considered a dropout.

This study conceptualises dropout as Jain (2006) does in her study (see chapter two):

- A student who enrolled in a grade/class/level but did not complete it and left the school.
- A student who failed the final examinations and did not come back.
- A student who passed a grade but did not get enrolled in another grade.

Most of the definitions provided by different researchers show similarity in how they perceive a ‘dropout’, although there are slight variations. All researchers agree that the process of ‘dropout’ is complex and it is even more difficult to keep track of it and access an updated record.

During the qualitative interviews with the participants of this study, they revealed interesting thoughts about the issue of dropout. Here are some quotes from respondents’ interviews.

‘Dropout is a complex process. It is hard to track school dropouts in the socio-educational situation like the one we have. The complication is caused by the fact that there is no strict rule for enrolment. The lack of coordination between public and private schools or the lack of any mechanism that monitors the activities of private and public schools is a problem. Private schools are too much profit oriented. They need students by all means. So, if a student fails a grade in one school, goes quietly to another private school and says, I was in so and so grade, so I want to enrol in so and so grade, they do not ask for a transfer certificate or any evidence. They simply enrol him/her.’

- Head teacher from the hills

The concept of dropout is hard to follow and find. All early school leavers are not dropouts.

- (DEO staff from the mountains)

‘But it is difficult to get the exact statistics of dropout. To follow dropout, you need to look in the catchment area. But the student who left school might have gone to another municipality or village development committee area. The schools should fill up the form provided by the DEO, but many of them do not, the private schools especially do not, and we can do nothing to private schools. If we were to provide funds to private schools, we could warn them saying if you do not submit the record, we will cancel your fund, or stop it. But that’s also not there. So private schools are not under our control’.

- (DEO staff from Terai)

2.3 'Girls', 'girl students' and 'female students'

Throughout this work the terms 'girls', 'girl students' have been used to refer to 'female students'. However, 'female students' has also been used at places. These terms are utilised because they are widely used by the existing relevant literature and are most common among readers.

2.4 Literature Search Method

The literature search strategy was carefully designed to identify the studies that have dealt with the issue of female students' school attainment, dropout or absence and the factors that influence female students' pursuit of educational gain. The search was conducted in February 2014, went on for four months, when similar results began to appear and the same hits were obtained among the most relevant articles.

The following databases and search engines were selected for literature search.

- Web of Science/Knowledge (Social Science Index)
- Scopus
- Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC)
- Pro-Quest
- Google Scholar
- University of Dundee Library and Learning Centre Advance Search

2.5 Gender Theory: Theoretical Base

2.5. 1 Gender Theory

Gender inequality in terms of access to resources and opportunities has been a strong characteristic of Nepalese family units, society and educational institutions (Flintan, 2003). Although a debate around the need of gender-balanced policy and

practice has gained priority in mainstream politics in Nepal, the cultural constraints continue to determine likelihood of females' educational, professional and economic successes. Therefore, it is important to include a good discussion of gender before deciding to utilise gender as a theoretical frame for understanding educational issue in question. The following section will present a discussion on gender and gender theory in general and gendering in Nepal.

Gender is a socially constructed and learnt behaviour (Thapa, 2009) and has its implications in daily life. According to Ridgeway (2011, p.4) 'gender, like race, is a categorical form of inequality in that it is based on a person's membership in a particular social group or category, in this case, the categories of females and males', and such 'categorical inequalities in a society are created and sustained by embedding membership in a particular category (e.g., being a man or woman) in systems of control over material resources and power'.

Rothchild argues that 'gender is a *process* rather than an attribute, and gender differences become ideas that are taught and reinforced by individuals through socialisations rather than tangible distinctions as determined by biology (Rothchild 2012, p. 4). Rothchild's argument draws upon Simone de Beauvoir's well-known claim 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman' (2011 [1949], p. 330). According to Burns and Kinder (2012 cited in Mendelberg and Karpowitz, 2016) gender categories are learned extremely early in life and form a core part of an individual's identity. Mendelberg and Karpowitz (2016, p.2) argue that 'differences between men and women are important because they correlate with inequality. Power, authority, and influence are fundamental resources. Men are far more likely than women to access and use them'.

Social constructionists argue that people acquire their gendered selves as a product of power relations. Taking inspiration from Michel Foucault (1926-1954), they see power as an oppressive and limiting structure (Gale, 2007). Similarly, 'drawing on Foucault, Deborah Kerfoot and David Knights argue that gender relations are a reflection of gendered subjectivities which in turn are constituted through power

relations. The maintenance of gender inequalities does not require continual external coercion but can be achieved through the actions of gendered individuals who 'choose' to act in ways that reproduce male domination' (Radke and Stam, 1994, p.6). Bacchi (2010) cites Kaveer (1994) bringing out the idea of structures that embed gender norms. According to Bacchi one 'should analyse the way the gender is constructed as a relationship of inequality by the rules and practices of different institution' (Bacchi, 2010, p. 25).

Lorber (1994, p.1) views gender as a social institution – 'a social structure that has its origins in the development of human culture'. According to Lorber 'like any social institution, gender exhibits both universal features and chronological and cross-cultural variations that affect individual lives and social interaction in major ways'. It 'establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself' (*Ibid.* p.1). To sum up, gender is an institution and an ideological domain which determines patterns of behaviour according to the socio-cultural norms of a society.

Gender theory, developed as a field of study during the 1970s and 1980s, challenged ideas of masculinity and femininity and of men and women as operating in history according to fixed biological determinants (Smith, 2001). The theories emerged during these decades and expanded later to engage in a critique of the existing meaning of sex roles and stereotypes associated with masculinity and femininity. The scholars advocating the theory maintained a critical stance in which the organisation of sex (gender/sexuality) is not taken as given but seen as potentially problematic and associated with power (Beasley, 2005).

Beasley (2005) considers feminist study as one of three major sub-fields (feminist, masculinity and sexuality) of gender. According to Beasley the critical history of feminism 'starts from a critique of the mainstream, of 'the norm', of what is taken for granted' and 'its critical stance takes the form of a critique of misogyny, the assumption of male superiority and centrality' (*Ibid.*, p16).

Beasley (2005) discusses feminism extensively revealing differences and variations within it. According to Beasley, liberal feminism, from its earliest forms to now, may be understood as focusing upon the elimination of constraints facing women and gaining equal civil rights for women as public citizens. Liberal feminists argue that stereotyping and discrimination caused less chance of education, fewer career opportunities, and other social dimensions in society for women and better allocation of resources can ensure that women obtain a fair share of educational opportunities (Yokozeki, 2009). However, liberal feminists are criticised for ignoring patriarchy, power and systematic subordination of women (*Ibid.*).

Radical feminists like Catharine MacKinnon (1982) viewed sex and gender as a worldwide system of domination of women by men through control of women's sexuality and procreative capacity and argued that the sex-gender system of women's oppression is deliberate, not accidental, and pervades other social institutions—the family especially, and also the mass media and religion, which produce the justification for women's subordination (Lorber, 1994). Stromquist (1990) argues that 'the radical feminist perspective would see the State as a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination via its strong defence of the family as the core unit of society'(p.145). In educational context they focus on male monopolisation of culture and knowledge and the sexual politics of everyday life in school. They argue that the structures of patriarchy and power play a key role in educational institutions pushing females to the margin (Yokozeki, 2009). According to Stromquist (1990) 'the radical feminist perspective would say that women do not receive priority from the state because, having assigned women the reproductive tasks, the state will concentrate on improving first the education of men. Besides, since men have been assigned predominance in the 'public' sphere and this sphere relies on educational credentials for many transactions, it is more important to ensure men's education first' (p.145).

Socialist feminism has a close association with Marxist feminism in their focus on women's oppression in the structure of society, power and gendered division of

labour (Lorber, 1994). The socialist feminist theorists 'would see an interconnection between ideological and economic forces, in which patriarchy and capitalism reinforce each other' (Stromquist, 1990, p 146). The socialist feminists argued that schools not only perpetuated gender discrimination in the form of curriculum and text materials but also reflected social class division of bourgeois and proletariat (Bowles and Gintis 1976 cited in Yokozeki, 2009).

There are other variants of feminism such as psychoanalytical feminists such as Nancy Chodorow (1978), Luce Irigaray ([1974] 1985), Juliet Mitchell (1975), and Gayle Rubin (1975), who argue that 'gender is embedded in the unconscious and is manifest in sexuality, fantasies, language, and the incest taboo. The focus is on sexuality as a powerful cultural and ideological force that oppresses women because it is inscribed in bodies and also in the unconscious' (Lorber, 1994, p.3).

Patriarchy is a central concept for socialist, radical and psychoanalytical feminists, but each of them have used the concept with slight variation. Radical feminists argue that men exert their domination of women exploiting their sexuality and childbearing. For socialist feminists their husbands dominating them at home was similar to that of their exploitation in labour market and discrimination in educational institutions. Psychoanalytic feminists viewed patriarchy as the symbolic rule of the father through gendered sexuality and the unconscious (Lorber, 1994).

2.5. 2 Gendering in Nepal

Studies conducted in Nepal show that gender inequality in terms of access to opportunities exists in several spheres of activities. The root of inequality lies in patriarchal socio-cultural and educational structures. Such structures seek to maintain male domination in access to opportunities and resources. According to Nepal's gender report produced by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), only 5.1% females were in Civil Service (Gazetted Posts), 18% females were in managerial positions and 5.9% of them were able to be members of parliament (Bhadra & Shah, 2007). In addition, 'there is a huge income-gap between men and

women both in terms of opportunities for employment, income generation and in the proportion of earned income; resulting in women to remain in poverty status' (*ibid.* p.12). According to Central Bureau of Statistics (2001) female comprised 31% of all paid workers as against 69% male.

Thus, in Nepal the processes of social construction that create gender are a deeply embedded hegemonic feature of social life (Potuchek, 1997 cited in Rothchild, 2012). Family is the first place where children are exposed and trained to understand and do gender. This is mostly achieved through division of labour at home and access to household resources. Household decision making and decision making in the national level are determined by patriarchal structures. According to Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI, 2017), Nepal ranks 115th out of 188 countries and sixth among the eight South Asian countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index (2016).

Agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of people and land is the major means of production. Females carry out most household responsibilities, yet they are deprived of the access to any kind of resources whether it is natural, human or social because of the hierarchical structure of Nepalese society. Women are generally denied land rights as sons become the successor of their parents' property (Thapa, 2009). The reason for such denial is the marriage system. In Nepalese culture daughters should go away to live with their husband's family after marriage. So, sons are considered long-term care takers of their parents. 'Moreover, after marriage, women's relation with her husband determines access to land. While they live with parents, it is brothers, and while with in-laws it is her husband, and in her old age it is her son who owns the property. Lack of ownership of land places them not only in sub-ordinate positions compared to men but at the same time makes their life insecure' (*ibid.*, p.6).

Furthermore, women's status also varies according to cast and gender. Gender relations exist differently in different cultures (Thapa, 2009). According to LeVine (1987) Nepal presents extreme ethnic diversity: Hindu versus Buddhists, tribe verses caste, mountain verses middle hills, highland versus lowland. Studies have shown

that women in the communities of Tibeto-Berman root have more freedom than those in the communities of Indo-Aryan origin (Thapa, 2009). Adhikari states:

The Indo-Aryan group is politically and culturally pre-dominated and mainly Hindu living in most cases in the hills and Terai regions. The Tibeto-Burman group is mainly Buddhist and lives in the hills and mountains regions of Nepal. It has been argued that women have more freedom of mobility and somewhat higher social status in this group. The Indo-Aryan parents prefer their daughters to marry outside their own villages at an early age and wish them to have children soon. Thus, the sociocultural norms and values relating to women are commonly conservative among the Indo-Aryans.But, the Tibeto-Burman prefers to marry within the same village, which allows the women greater access to family and economic resources after marriage. (Adhikari, 2013, p.5).

The findings of the current study reveal that female students' school retention is affected by caste and ethnicities and the respondents revealed that even the girls from Tibeto-Berman root drop out significantly. Therefore, the findings of this study do not support this claim of girls' certain ethnicities having considerable freedom and access to resources specifically in relation to educational gain/disadvantage for girl students.

2.5.4 Theoretical Base

The studies selected for the literature review and the whole of this thesis show a strong link between gender issues and female students' school education. Gender affects socio-cultural activities differently in different societies. In Nepal there are variations in gender behaviours among various cultural groups.

This study uses socialist and radical feminist gender theories for understanding and interpreting the findings because these theories focus on patriarchy, economy and

power relations while exploring the cause of gender inequality in a society, educational organisation and household.

In relation to educational gender issues as discussed in 2.5.3, socialist feminists argue that schools perpetuate gender division by reproducing socio-cultural practices and gender-based pattern of behaviour within schools (Acker, 1987). Radical feminists argue that males have monopolised knowledge and culture. Therefore, females' concern should be prioritised in order to avoid gender imbalance in educational attainment. Radical feminists believe that education is a tool to release women from subordination (Yokozeki, 2009). Both the theories consider patriarchal socio-educational structures responsible for perpetuating gender inequality.

While exploring the issues of female dropout, this study will also advance the knowledge of gender and education in Nepalese context. Socialist and radical feminist gender theorising will be helpful to interpret the views of the participants of this study and to provide a theoretical underpinning. These feminist theories help understand how the cultural aspects of gender norms shape domestic, social and educational decisions. These theories add new dimension of broad social and political perspective missing in earlier liberal feminist interpretations (Dillabough, 2001).

This study also has decided that socialist and radical gender theoretical lenses will be useful to look into and analyse the issues found by the studies reviewed in this chapter. The studies uncover a range of factors within school system as well as factors outside of schools.

2.6 Research Questions

The research questions below present the focus of this study. The main research question was determined before going into actual search and before formulating the key words. The main focus of the research underwent a change in the course of the review of the relevant literature. The initial research question based on socio-cultural speculation was:

- What factors influence high school girl students' dropout in Nepal?

The main research question needed modification on account of the findings of the relevant literature and the gaps in it. The key decision was made after the study and analysis of selected pieces of relevant literature. It was found that no relevant study conducted in Nepal had a sole focus on the impact of school system on female student dropout. The outcome of the review led to the main question and sub-questions. Schools cater to the educational need of a society and function within a society. Therefore, this study acknowledges that while exploring the effect of the school system, it will also discuss the effect of socio-cultural factors.

Main Question:

- What impact do the school system, teaching and assessment have on high school girl students' likelihood of dropout?

Sub questions:

- Is there any conflict between the norms and values inherent in the school system and the target of learning outcome set by the curriculum?
- Is there any link between the formal examination system and girl students' dropout?
- What socio-cultural factors cause girl students to abandon their schooling early?

The key words such as 'girls' schooling', 'girls' dropout', 'girls' education', and 'female education', 'high school curriculum', 'high school system', 'gender', 'school attainment', 'high school and examinations' were derived from the research questions. They were combined with Nepal, the location of the proposed study, and 'female dropout'. In the word combinations the name of the neighbouring country India, and even the broader geographical location such as South Asia was used to enhance the possibility of obtaining the maximum number of relevant studies. The

rationale behind using India or South Asia is that India borders three sides of Nepal and has significantly similar socio-cultural and educational features. Other South Asian countries also have a similar educational scenario.

2.6 Testing of Key Words and Results

Initially the testing of the keywords was carried out to see if the key words could generate the expected results. After the testing the key words were used in various combinations. Some databases with certain key words generated as low as one or two titles. Google scholar generated the highest number of hits. In total the search generated 1412 hits (See Table 1). The key words also generated relevant studies based in Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world.

2.7 Categorising the Results: Step by Step Screening

2.7.1 The First Step: Titles

The first step of screening was performed by reading only titles. The literature extracted from the pool of hits was categorised as **‘relevant on first sight’** based on the word combinations in the titles. For example, a title such as *‘Passing by the Girls? Remittance Allocation for Educational Expenditures and Social Inequality in Nepal’s Households 2003-2004’* was taken as ‘relevant on first sight’ as its implication is about girls and also about education.

2.6.2 The Second Step: Abstract

The second step was to read the abstracts to carry out further screening and to find the **‘most relevant’** studies. The above-mentioned topic (*‘Passing by the Girls? Remittance Allocation for Educational Expenditures and Social Inequality in Nepal’s Households 2003-2004’*) was not included in the ‘most relevant’ category as it explored ‘impact of remittance’ rather than girl students school attainment. Those that met the inclusion criteria were categorised as ‘most relevant’.

2.6.3 The Third Step: Full Texts

The full texts of the most relevant articles were obtained. Some articles, that were initially included in the 'most relevant' category, were removed after reading the texts because the focus of the studies did not meet the criteria for inclusion (See 2.5).

2.8 Phased Approach of Search and Screening

The literature search took place in different phases. It was found that only one phase of search could not find all the most relevant studies. The phased approach was also required because the empirical studies found in the first and the second phase revealed a gap in the literature and from this my research questions and the focus of the study needed modification. The literature retrieved from the first two phases of the search dealt with the socio-cultural aspects of the problem of dropout. The key word combinations used for the search directed it to the socio-cultural aspect of dropout. After rephrasing the research questions to focus on the impact of school system, curriculum, educational policy, a third phase of search and screening was required.

2.8.1 The First Phase: Studies Based in Nepal

In the first phase of search and screening, attempts were made to look out for studies based in Nepal. The relevant studies based in Nepal were minimal. So, the search needed to be expanded to wider geographical locations. At the end of the search, only seven studies based in Nepal were found to be relevant.

2.8.2 The Second Phase: Studies Based Outside of Nepal

The search and inclusion criteria were expanded and studies based in the developing world outside Nepal were considered. The geographical boundary was expanded to South Asian countries, Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the developing and developed world taking into consideration the focus of the research issue.

2.8.3 The Third Phase: Studies with their Focus on School System and Educational Policy

Only a few studies that were selected for the literature review from the first and the second phase of the search and selection process showed any interest in school factors such as class size, the quality of student-teacher interaction, the availability of adequate school amenities and the presence of female teachers in school. They did not have a sole focus on the impact of educational policy, curriculum and the examination system on female students' dropout. Therefore, a more exhaustive search was deemed necessary. The third phase of search and screening attempted to find the studies that explored the impact of the school system and educational policy on female students' dropout. Most of the studies found were based in the USA. Hence even wider geographical locations were considered.

2.9 Selection Criteria for Inclusion

The following parameter was set and applied to categorise a study 'most relevant' and to select for an in-depth review:

- The study must have been published as a journal article or a book. Or the study must be a major thesis submitted to a university toward a post-graduate degree
- The study must have been published after 1990: the rationale is that the literature must have dealt with the contemporary social realities and Nepal government has taken important steps (see introduction) following the Jomtien World Education Conference (1990).

The study must have discussed:

- ◆ School dropouts in Nepal, with focus on gender gap
- ◆ School dropouts in Nepal: Primary School or Secondary School, focus on girl students' schooling

- ◆ The studies that focused on school system, curriculum, educational policy in relation to female dropout or dropout in general
- ◆ School dropouts in India or any other South Asian country with similar socio-cultural scenario with focus on girl students' school attendance and dropout
- ◆ Factors that cause girl students' dropout in Nepal
- ◆ Girl students' dropout anywhere in the world with similar socio-cultural context and issues analogous to the Nepalese scene
- ◆ The articles and books that included data or evidence

2.10 Criteria for Exclusion

A vast number of titles were irrelevant to my study as the search engines retrieved all topics that contained the key words such as Nepal, India, and girls, including a wide range of subjects such as HIV AIDS, pregnancy, abortion, girls trafficking and political or other social issues related to girls.

The exclusion criteria are basically embedded in the criteria for inclusion. Those studies that did not meet the criteria for inclusion were excluded or termed as 'irrelevant'.

2.11 The results

A total of 278 articles were identified as relevant on first sight out of which 56 articles were found most relevant. Excluding repetition (32), 24 articles discussed the gender; sociocultural, school factors, educational policy and girl students school attainment and dropout.

Eight of them were based in Nepal, one of which, Basnet, 2013, was eventually excluded from the selection. Having read the full article, it was found that this study

looked at gender discrimination in the home and school environment. It researched on factors that influenced boys' and girls' enrolment in schools. But it did not explore whether gender played any role in their continuation or whether any household and school factors caused discontinuation.

A limited number of articles were found to be focusing their research in Nepal. Therefore, the studies carried out in some Sub-Saharan African countries dealing with girl students' schooling, school attainment and dropout were also selected for the review. Some studies from other South Asian countries, India and Bangladesh, were found relevant and were selected. Regarding the studies with focus on school factors, educational policy and dropout, almost all studies found to be most relevant are based in the USA except for one which is based in Australia.

2.12 Repetition

The search engines could not find many studies based on the Nepalese education system, female education and girl students' school incompleteness and dropout. The few generated in initial searches were repeated in the later searches. Google scholar generated some new titles that were relevant and that the earlier searches did not find. The key words generated some relevant studies based in the different parts of the developing world. Some of these studies also appeared again in the later searches. Before the final list was ready for inclusion, the duplication of the titles was omitted.

The pie chart below provides an overview of the literature search results.

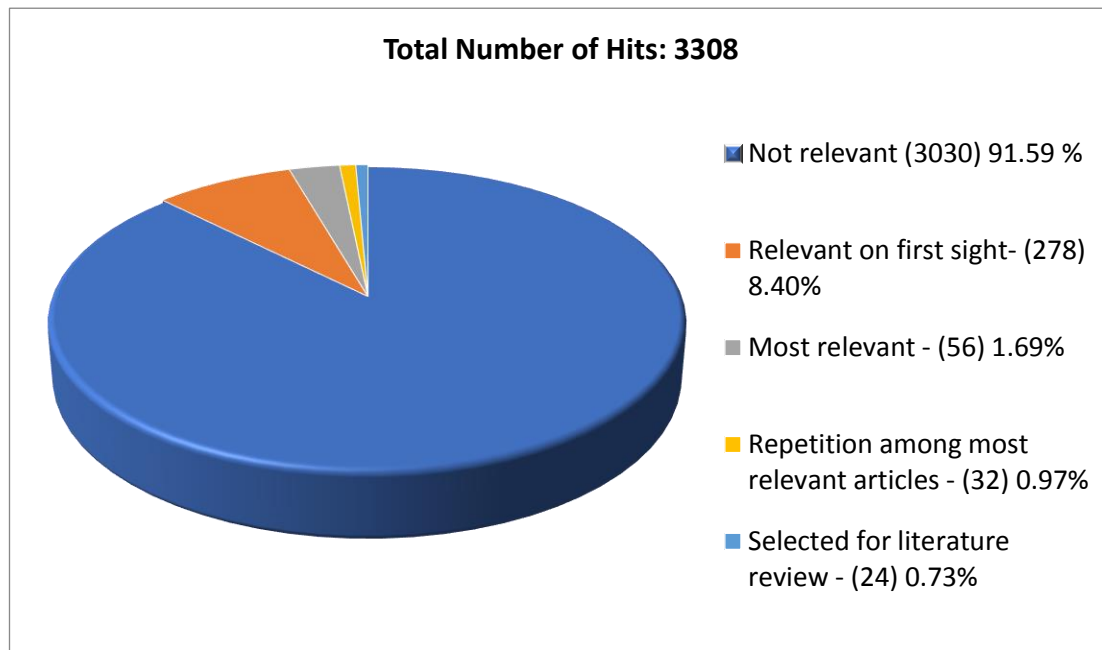


Figure 2. 1. Literature search summary

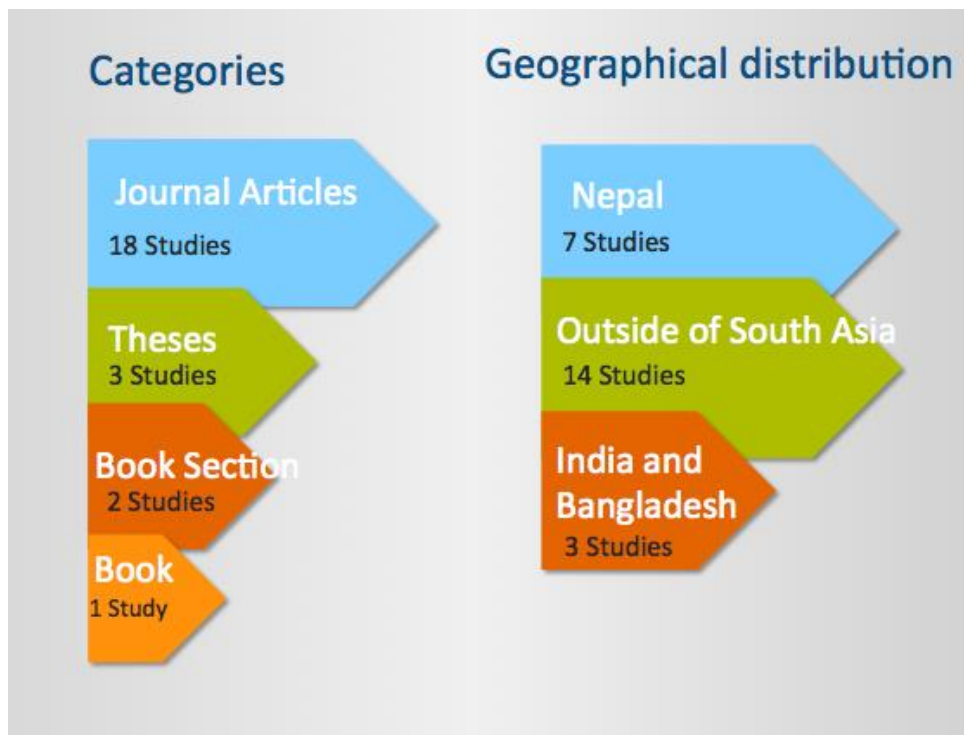


Figure 2. 2. Literature categories and their location of study

2.13 Studies Based in Nepal

The spread of mass education after the fifties is a remarkable event in the history of educational development in Nepal. Along with the rapid spread of education, the modernization movement attempted to catch up with the pace of modern developments in the rest of the world. This phenomenon conflicted with the traditional socio-cultural family value systems.

This section focuses on the analysis of papers that present their studies based in Nepal. These studies examine different aspects of girl students' education with an intention to inquire into the factors that influence their school attainment. The studies based in Nepal explore female students school attainment with focus on the conflicting motifs of modernism and traditionalism inherent in Nepalese society.

2.13.1 Gendered Home and Schools, Gender and Social Change, Caste and Ethnicity

Majority of studies that investigate effect of caste and gender on school attainment find that caste is a strong predictor of educational attainment. However, Stash and Hannum (2001) reviewed in this chapter contradicts other studies stating that belonging to higher caste doesn't guarantee a better chance of girls' school completion. Neupane (2017) finds an adverse impact of gender and caste/ethnic hierarchy on the final exam scores of female and lower caste/ethnic group students. She argues that 'double disadvantage of gender and culture is one of the major factors behind girls' poor educational attainment, especially in regions of high ethnic diversity' (*Ibid.*, p.69). Adhikari (2013) declares that gender is a primary cause of discrimination and caste is secondary. According to her 'gender issue seems more critical because caste discrimination is between higher caste and lower. But gender discrimination is found more or less in every caste and class either that is higher caste Brahmin or untouchable Dalit' (*Ibid.*, p.13).

Various studies selected for review in this chapter explore the notion of gender in the context of female literacy, access to educational cycle and educational attainment in

Nepal. The studies take the practical implication of gendered thinking as one of the most important factors influencing girl students schooling and educational outcome.

I look at four studies based in Nepal initially that discuss gender as one of the most prominent socio-cultural factors to constrain girl students' school outcome: Rothchild (2005), Beutel & Axinn (2002), Stash & Hannum (2001), and Levine (2006). Rothchild – though she finds gendering a persistent determining factor- comes to the conclusion that the 'gendering' is not 'homogeneous absolute', it changes over time with social change. Stash and Hannum (2001) study the gendering in relation to change in the environment, taking into account the family members' exposure to non-family organisations. Beutel and Axinn (2002) observe the effect of gender, caste and ethnicity on school entrance and attainment. Levine (2006) focuses on the women who went to school before the nineties. These studies find that the issues of gender inequalities constantly interact with social change, parental economic and educational backgrounds regarding female students' schooling gain.

Jennifer Rothchild's (2005) qualitative study explores how the 'process of gendering outside school influences girls' participation in school and the extent of that participation and what roles the 'schools as gendered institutions' play. Her findings support socialist feminists' perspective that sees schools as sites for socio-cultural reproduction and framing of social identities (Dillabough, 2001).

Her research is based on a case study in Jiri, a rural village of Nepal where she conducted observation in 20 respondent girls' households and their schools. She interviewed the girl students' 38 parents, 12 teachers, 10 head teachers and 328 randomly selected community members.

She finds that households are gendered in three ways: i) patrilocal marriage tradition (girls leave their parents' home after marriage), ii) non-agricultural employment is perceived as more appropriate for males than for females iii) the accepted gender-based division of agricultural work requires more routine work from females than males.

Rothchild's study reveals that the gendering in social and educational spaces is a persistent determinant of girl students' schooling outcome. It causes imbalance between household workload, educational responsibility and causes dropout.

The following flowchart shows how the variables related to gendering relate to each other, which ultimately affect girl students school attainment.

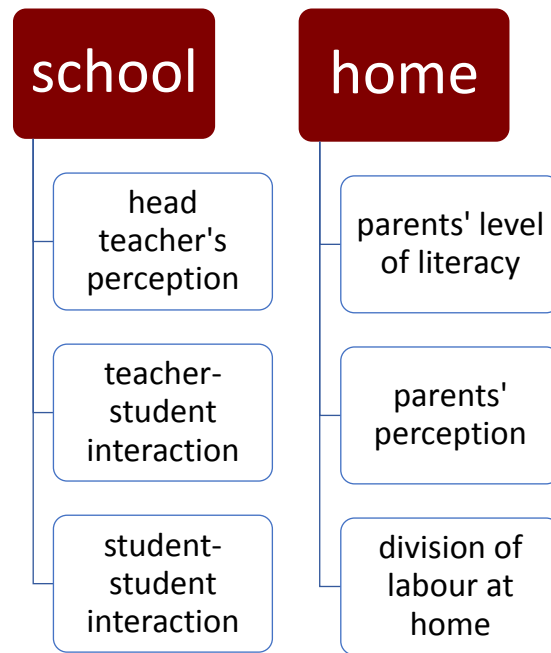


Figure 2. 3. Rothchild (2005): process of gendering

Rothchild however adds a positive note with some examples of life narratives. She concludes that 'socially constructed gender constraints are dynamic rather than static and can be negotiated'. These are subject to change with social change.

Beutel and Axinn (2002) is another study with a focus similar to Rothchild (2005) but it differs from Rothchild in its methodology and location of study in Nepal. It contains a larger sample and the method of analysis is quantitative. It adds two important variables interacting with gender –social change and the presence of non-family services and organisations.

Beutel and Axinn aim to test three key hypotheses: i) the impact of gender on educational attainment, the connections between gender and the specific dimension of the educational attainment process, such as enrolment and drop-out rates ii) the impact of social changes in the community iii) the impact of local-level social change on the individual-level relationship between gender and educational attainment. The social change that the researchers focus on is characterised by ‘the proliferation of non-family schools, non-family wage labour employment opportunities, non-family markets, and non-family transportation services.’

An important conclusion of the Beutel and Axinn study is that the effect and influence of the presence of non-family services and organisation has a significant gender effect on school entry because the analysis shows that it raises the possibility of girls’ entry into the school considerably, but the effect is not that significant in girls’ school exit.

The following figure presents how gender impact functions in the presence of non-family services.

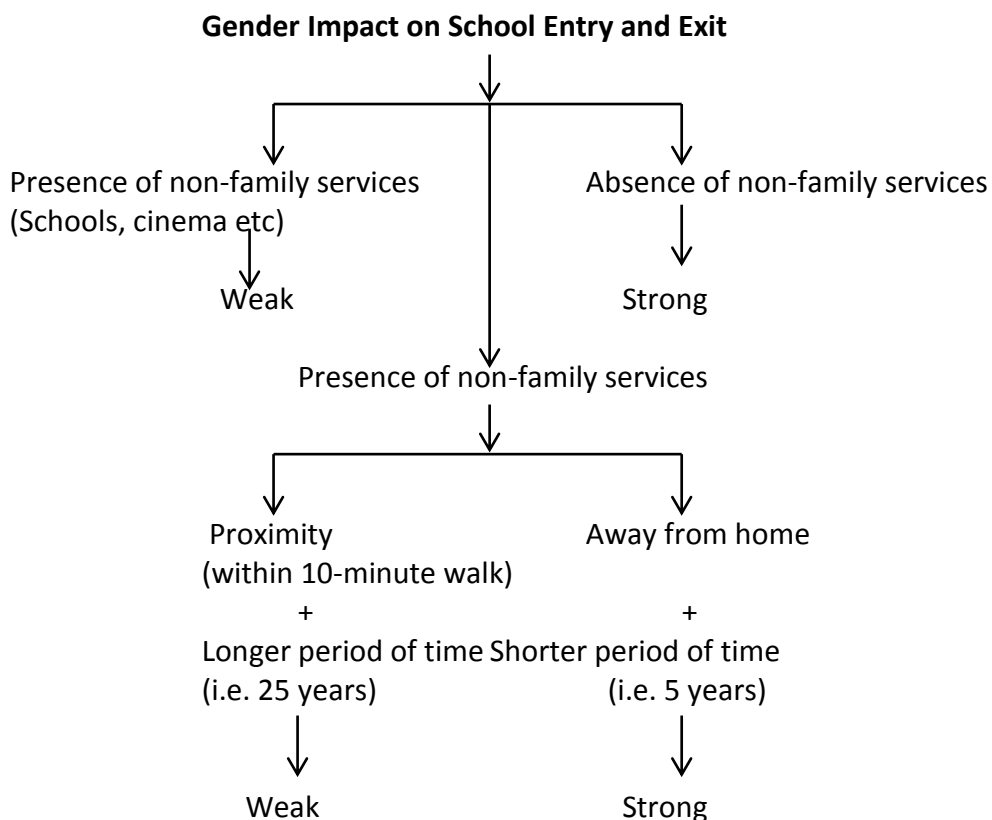


Figure 2. 4. Beutel and Axinn (2002): Gender impact on school entry and exit

The figure above summarises the findings of Beutel and Axinn study. The presence of public services such as school, cinema, marketplaces and supermarkets in a locality have a significant impact on the role of gender in educational attainment. According to the study the availability of such services in closer distance and for longer period of time weakens the effect of gender.

Stash & Hannum (2001), like Rothchild (2005) and Beutel & Axinn (2002), explore the effect of gender on school entrance and attainment. It differs from the other studies in the way it looks at the issue, introducing new variables such as caste and ethnicity. This study includes a large body of sample and analyses quantitatively. The findings of this study reveal the nature of the issue in a new light.

Stash and Hannum aimed to examine two issues related to inclusive education: i) Has the historical expansion of education narrowed the education gap by gender and caste? ii) To what extent do caste and gender affect basic educational access and progress among school aged children? The researchers wanted to see if any change has occurred in the degree of inequality in primary education in the context of the historical expansion of education that has occurred in Nepal in the past half century.

These questions are crucial and some studies find that the gap of gender inequality in terms of the access and retention of females in schools in Nepal is narrowing. Yet the gap exists. Stash and Hannum explored the issue, obtaining nationally representative data from completed household rosters of 24,745 prepared by Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey (NFS) in 1991.

Contrary to general expectations that have resulted from a number of other studies, the study finds that residence in urban areas and household heads with higher education do not guarantee gender equity in educational decision-making. More conservative attitudes toward women in high-caste households are reflected in fewer chances for girls ever being allowed to enter the educational process. Socially, high-caste households discriminate more strongly against girls than do ethnic groups

in the middle or lower parts of the caste hierarchy. So far as the educational attainment of girls is concerned, the findings of this study reveal that girls who did enter have an equal chance of progression as boys.

Stash & Hannum contradict both Rothchild (2005) and Beutel & Axinn (2002) studies regarding girl students' school exit. Whereas Rothchild and Beutel & Axinn studies find the possibility of girl students' exit even after they obtain entry into the school system, Stash & Hannum conclude that such girl students manage to progress at an equal rate as boys. The figure below captures the essence of gender and caste factors discussed by Stash and Hannum.

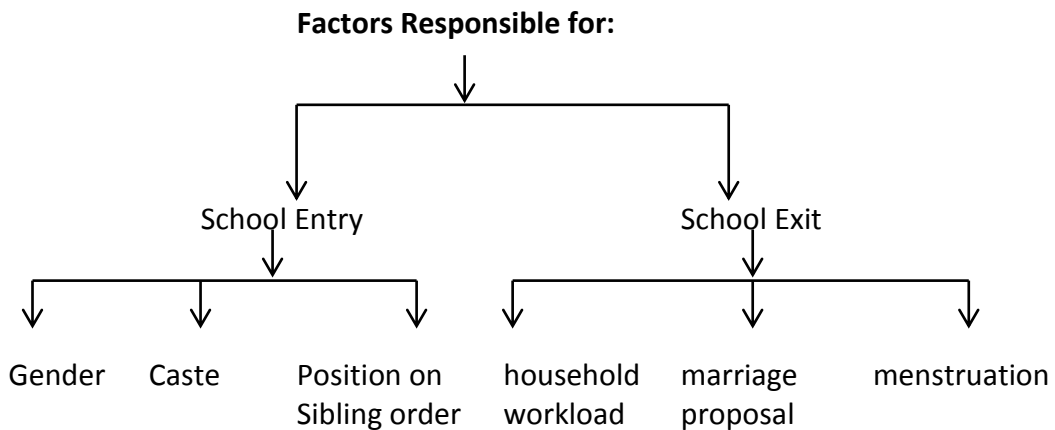


Figure 2. 5. Stash and Hannum (2001): factors responsible for school entry and exit

LeVine (2006) is another study that has its focus on gender, women's literacy and girl students' dropout. The implication of the LeVine (2006) findings resembles Rothchild's study, although Levine's respondents went to school before the nineties. LeVine's study correlates the mother's literacy behaviour with the daughter's schooling outcome. Robert A LeVine et al. in an inter-country comparative study of a larger nature support the proposition that literacy is a pathway through which women's schooling affects maternal behaviour related to the health and education of her children in less developed countries (Robert A LeVine, 2012).

Analysis in LeVine (2006)'s study is based on a study of the impact of women's schooling on reproductive and child health and children's acquisition of literacy. The larger study was conducted by a team of researchers in the Lalitpur district from January 1997 to June 1998 with a finding that 'schooling – in particular the development of literacy skills- helped women to contribute to their children's survival and health' and also that the children of schooled mothers acquired literacy more smoothly than the children of illiterate mothers (p.21). LeVine draws on a subset of data from that larger study to focus on the factors determining school attendance among high-caste (priestly, landowning) and middle-caste (farmers) Nepali mothers of young children.

LeVine's study draws some useful findings (See Table 2) from the survey and the respondent women's life narratives. The factors that supported women to continue their studies were family status; financial support and siblings birth order.

Some more factors working against girl students educational gain are brought to light by LeVine's study in addition to the factors such as gendering at home and school that Rothchild finds. Besides, the unequal distribution of domestic labour, LeVine finds that lack of economic benefit to parents, onset of menstruation and arrival of marriage proposals also pulled the girl students out of school. These additional factors also have gender implication.

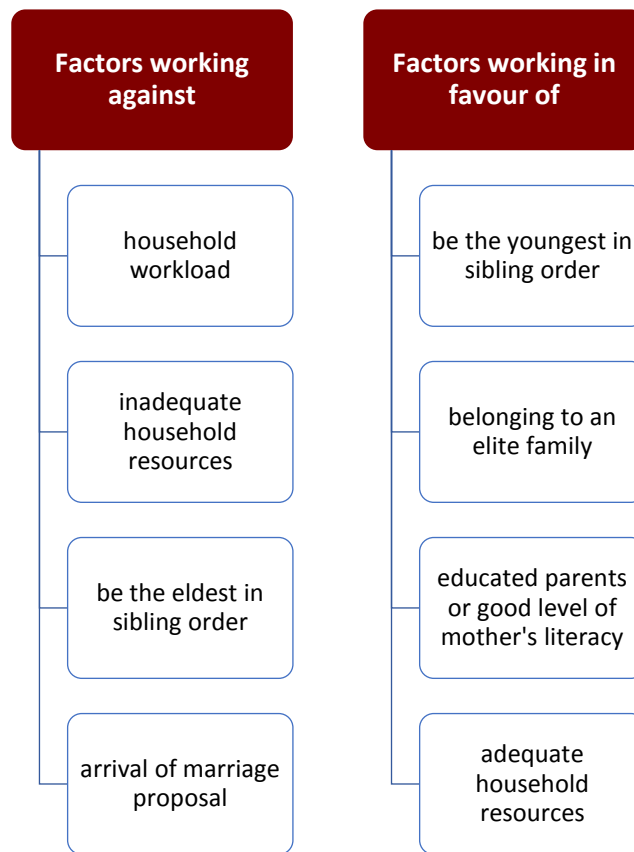


Figure 2. 6. LeVine (2006): Girl students' schooling

The table below puts these four studies together with their methods of data collection and findings.

Table 2. 1 Summary of the Studies Included in 2.12

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Rothchild (2005)	<p>Location: Sindhupa-Lchok District, Jiri Nepal</p> <p>Sample Size: 426</p> <p>Participants: Teachers, Head Teachers, Students, Parents, community members</p> <p>Interviews – structured interviews in school and home settings. Observation- direct classroom observation and field observation of the daily life. Collection of life narratives</p>	<p>-gendering at home, school both constrain girl students schooling</p> <p>- at home girls are made to do more housework</p> <p>- majority of community members and parent respondents thought boys are more intelligent</p> <p>- head teachers thought of girls' roles as future wives, mothers, housekeepers whereas boys' roles as future bread winners</p> <p>- teacher student interactions were gendered as teachers paid more attention to boys</p> <p>conclusion: construction of gender at home and schools are the persistent determinants of girl students school outcome.</p>	<p>-Lacks comparison between urban and rural settings.</p> <p>-How structured were the observations of daily life of children? Were they conducted with prior notice?</p> <p>-Were the interviews recorded, transcribed and analysed?</p> <p>The paper lacks explanation on these questions.</p>
Beutel & Axinn (2002)	<p>Location of study: Chitwan district, Nepal</p> <p>Samples: 171 neighbourhoods</p>	<p>- gender has large effects on school entrance. In the first model the possibility of boys' entry into the school is 51% higher annually than the girls.</p> <p>- the longer non-family services in neighbourhood, the higher chance of sending girls to school</p>	<p>Some unanswered questions?</p> <p>-how was the survey done by CVFS? What level of literacy was required for it?</p> <p>-how was the history of the schools collected?</p>

	<p>Uses data collected by CVFS¹. CVFS collected data from neighbourhoods, households and individuals. Every individual between the ages of 15 and 59 was interviewed. Uses multivariate models, analysis: logistic regression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chance of school exit for children in a neighbourhood with a school within a 10-minute- walk for 25 years is 33% less than those in a neighbourhood with a school within a 10-minute- walk for 5 years. - gender has a stronger effect on girls than boys regarding school exit -being a boy the chance of exiting school in any year is 40% less than that of the girls. - presence of non-family services have stronger effect on school entry than school exit 	<p>-was it from school records? By interviewing head teachers? Or from the records in the district office? How many schools were included in the study?</p>
<p>Stash & Hannum (2001)</p>	<p>Location of Study: All 75 districts, Nepal Sample size: 24745 households Participants: Children and young adults, children of 15 years</p> <p>Survey data from NFS and DHS. NFS's method was multistage cluster sampling. Household rosters studied to see change over time in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -gender has a strong influence in school entrance. Across the models boys have been found to be 7 times more likely to enter primary schools than girls. -similar effect is of caste. Newars have higher enrolment. High caste priests and Brahmins have second high enrolment, in third place are the hill ethnic group, fourth are other hill ethnic groups such as Tamang and Bhotia, castes from the Terai, plains bordering India, fall into fifth place, the low castes including the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -lacks explanation about nature and procedure of survey of NFS. -completion of education of household heads mentioned as 1, 2, 3 years, how was it worked out? Asking? Or from official record? -same question applies to possession index, how is it prepared?

¹ Chitwan Valley Family Study (CVFS)

	<p>school enrolment and educational attainment by gender and caste.</p>	<p>untouchables have the lowest enrolment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - neither urban residence nor higher levels of education among household heads facilitate gender equity in educational decision making - girls who did enter school progressed at an equal rate through the primary grades as boys. There is no gender and caste effect on primary school attainment. 	
LeVine (2006)	<p>Location of Study: Lalitpur district, Nepal</p> <p>Sample size and type: 167,</p> <p>Women born between 1950-1975 whose children were in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-depth interviews – open ended questions about school experience, their parents’ and siblings’ schooling educational goals for their children conducted with 20 women. <p>Survey questionnaire based on the interview was given out to 167 women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -high-caste progressive Hindu parents thought sending daughters to schools was essential -For the girls from elite families (from the 1950s to the 1980s), school going was normal but the girls from traditional families needed motivation and monetary support from someone outside the family- usually maternal uncle -position in the sibling order was crucial for the women, being only a girlchild or being the youngest increased the chances of schooling -unequal distribution of workload in the family adversely affected their education -in the same way the arrival of a marriage proposal and the onset of menstruation did affect their schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -religion has been mentioned but there’s no comparison of perception between Hinduism and Buddhism etc. -lacks samples from lower rung of Hindu caste hierarchy. -were 20 women interviewed completely different? Or were they among 167 women included in survey? -how were 20 women divided between two locations 10:10 or 12:8 or 14:6? -the research also lacks any male perception on the issue for comparison.

2.14 Studies Based in Nepal (Contd.)

A number of studies explore the nature of the correlation between parental economic and educational characteristics to children's educational outcomes. Some studies—for instance Dancer and Rammohan (2007) discussed in this section—find that maternal schooling or level of literacy has a strong correlation with daughters' schooling. Socialist feminists argue that a capitalist society accepts 'women's devalued role as workers' (Stromquist, 1990, p.147). 'The time of low-income women is generally taken by domestic and poorly remunerated work; these women are not available for schooling, especially in societies where the economy relies heavily on subsistence production' (*Ibid.*, p.147). Other factors have also been considered while examining girl students' school outcome and dropout behaviour. Such factors include parental occupation and socio-cultural phenomena that favour gender bias. One of the studies discussed in this section examines the girls' physiological factor such as onset of menstruation.

Menstruation and its causal impact on girl students' schooling cannot be viewed in isolation. It is interlinked deeply with social practices and cultural beliefs, parents' and community members' level of education. Oster & Thornton (2009) look into menstruation, the use of sanitary products and girls' school attendance. The third study discussed is Manandhar and Sthapit (2013), who conduct a comparative study of boys' and girls' primary school completion and dropout rates. This study reveals the school completion rate in five years' time and places emphasis on parental participation and awareness, which links this study's focus to the parents' level of literacy and education.

2.14.1 Girl Students' Schooling: Maternal Education, Parental Occupation, Household Wealth

Dancer & Rammohan (2007) focuses on the intergeneration link regarding children's schooling, looking at the causal impact of mother's education on children's school attainment. Maternal education is related to household resources, which has a clear

impact on children's school outcome. Therefore, this study establishes a link between household resources, maternal education and children's school outcome 'through two-stage stratified sample design' on the basis of which the researchers 'estimated a sample selection model controlling for cluster fixed effects.

The data obtained from NDHS contained information on household structure, labour market participation, asset ownership, health and educational characteristics for all the household members.

Low levels of schooling among mothers was observed, with 80% of the mothers in the sample having no schooling and only around 13% of the mothers with a primary education. Yet, the employment rate of these mothers was high, with 88% being employed, although the majority of them (65%) being in unpaid employment. Their unpaid employment was of a self-employed nature or working for the family. The educational levels of fathers, although low, was substantially higher than mothers in the sample for example 42% of the children had fathers with no schooling, with over a quarter having primary education and over 33% being secondary or higher graduates.

The researchers disaggregated the sample by schooling outcomes and compared the sample of children who had some schooling with those children who had no schooling. It was observed that children with no schooling also had a greater proportion of mothers with no schooling (nearly 88%) compared to school going children.

Various explanatory variables such as child, sibling, and parental and household characteristics were included to see the range of factors linked to maternal education and children's schooling outcome. In maternal characteristics the mother's education and economic status were considered. Maternal economic status was enhanced by the mother being better educated, participating in the labour market, and if she had ownership of income generating assets such as land and livestock.

The demographic characteristics of the household are taken into account by including household size, the number of children, the presence of preschool age siblings and the presence of pre-school age siblings and the proportion of female children in the household.

The findings (See Table 3) were drawn from the patterns of relation seen between the variables. The results show that there is a strong intergenerational link of educational outcome. Educated mothers have a clear effect on daughters' continuity in school.

This finding is in contrast with the Stash & Hannum (2001) study, which finds that 'neither urban residence nor higher levels of education among household heads facilitate gender equity in educational decision making.' Stash & Hannum also find that 'girls who did enter school progressed at an equal rate through the primary grades as boys.'

Both these studies are based in Nepal and both incorporate a large mass of population as their samples. Stash & Hannum (2001) has samples from all 75 districts. The contrary nature of findings of these studies is worth taking into account.

It is useful to see the quote of Heltberg & Johannesen (2002) by Mukherjee & Das (2008) which goes along the line of Dancer & Rammohan (2007). 'Heltberg and Johannesen (2002) found that the education of the parents, especially that of the mother had a strong impact on human capital outcomes'. (Das, 2008)

The figure below brings together the variables interacting with each other in relation to daughters' school outcome.

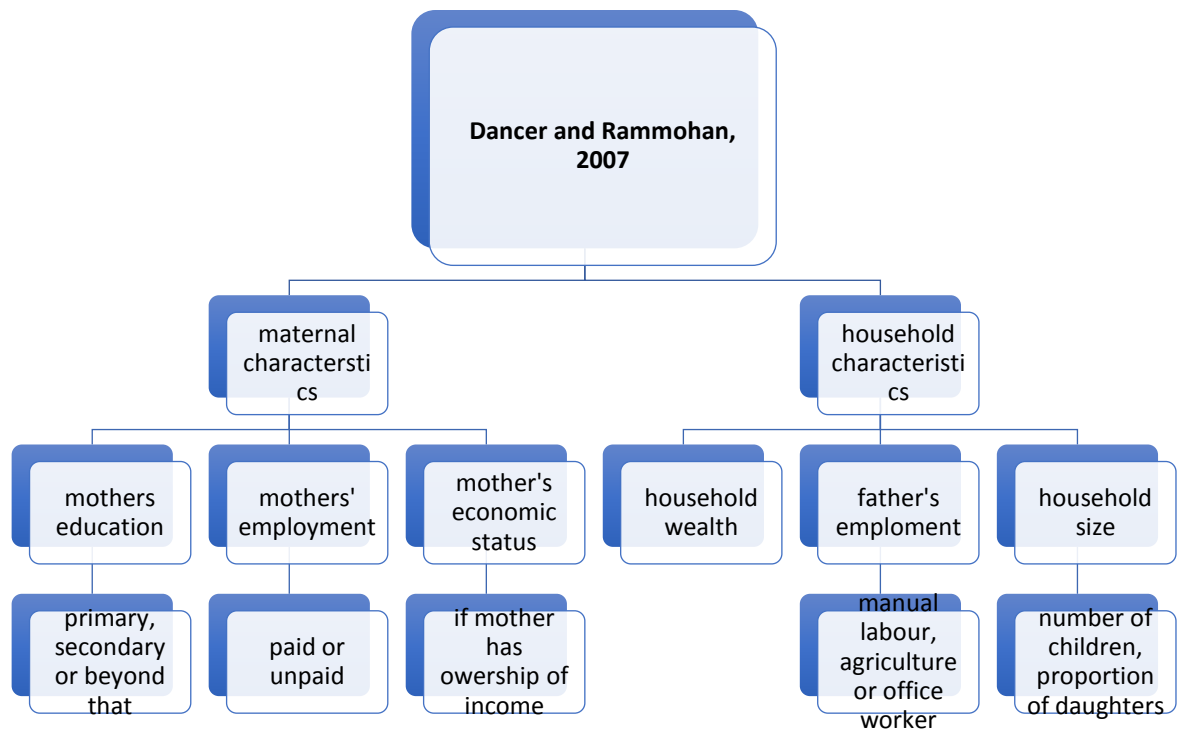


Figure 2. 7. Explanatory variables linked to daughters' school outcome

2.14.2 Menstruation and Use of Sanitary Products

Menstruation as a crucial cause for girls leaving school has been an issue of key debate in some social contexts. Most of the studies focusing on this topic are based in the traditional societies of south Asian and Sub-Saharan-countries. They have emphasised that the onset of menstruation poses a physiological and symptomatic challenge to girls, which limits their activities and interaction with teachers and fellow students (Dalton, 1991). Such studies 'illustrate how emotional geographies of puberty and menstruation are productive of and help to reproduce gender inequalities in mobility and access to social capital resources, especially education' (Sarah Jewitt, 2014).

Oster & Thornton (2009) test the previous claims regarding menstruation and its causal impact on girl students' school attendance. 'The typical calculation put

forward is that if a girl misses 4 days of school every 4 weeks (due to her period), she may miss 10 to 20 percent of her school days (World Bank 2005).’ And these researches come to the conclusion that ‘providing girls with modern sanitary products may help them to be able to attend school during their periods (LaFraniere 2005, Tjon a Ten 2007, Mawathe 2006)’. Oster and Thornton (2009) reject the claim of these studies. With a longitudinal study conducted in Chitwan, Nepal, they find that the causal impact of menstruation is not that significant and the use of modern sanitary products can raise attendance only by 0.021 point percent.

A sample of adolescent girls with an average age of 14 and their mothers selected randomly from various castes and ethnicities were followed longitudinally for 15 months. An intervention of a menstrual cup was administered and its effect was measured.

One of the most important findings of this study is that the use of modern sanitary products has minimal impact on girl students’ school attendance (See table 3). This study’s findings thus reject that menstruation limits girl students’ access to schooling and causes gender inequality. Although the study excludes the consideration of cultural limitations and taboos in some parts of Nepalese society, the findings are useful.

Oster and Thornton’s (2009) prime focus of study has been presented in the following figure.

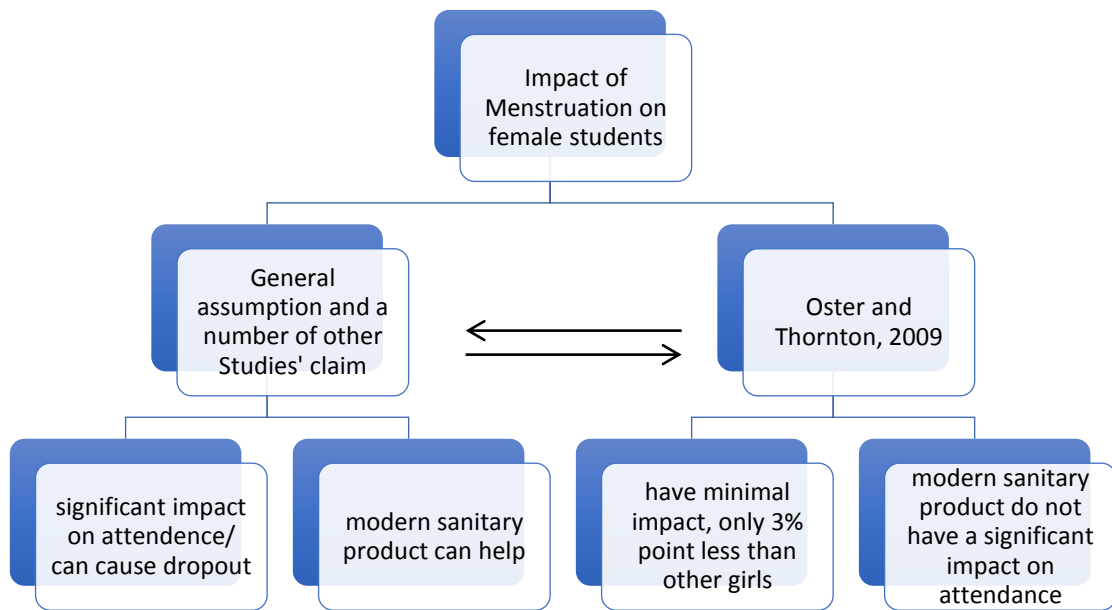


Figure 2. 8. Oster and Thornton (2009): menstruation and female students

2.14.3 Primary School Completion and Dropout

The consolidated report of the Nepalese Ministry of Education reveals a significant improvement in net enrolment in primary level education. According to the report the net enrolment rate of boys is 95.3% and that of the girls is 93.6% (MOE, 2011). In spite of this, various socio-economic and cultural barriers compel children to dropout.

Manandhar & Sthapit (2012) conducted a retrospective cohort study to see the pattern of primary school completion and dropout in the Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts of Nepal. This study was carried out in 2010 obtaining attendance record for five years from 2005 to 2009.

The conclusion drawn from the interview was that parental awareness and community participation in primary schools are key measures that can play a vital role in improving primary children's schooling. However, Manandhar & Sthapit do not say how many respondents were included in the interviews and what kind of

questions were asked. The findings indicate that the primary school completion rate for the given data is 48.99%, in which the completion rate excludes the students who had to repeat in the same grade and who dropped out. Figure 8 shows how Manandhar and Sthapit work out the number of students in a grade.

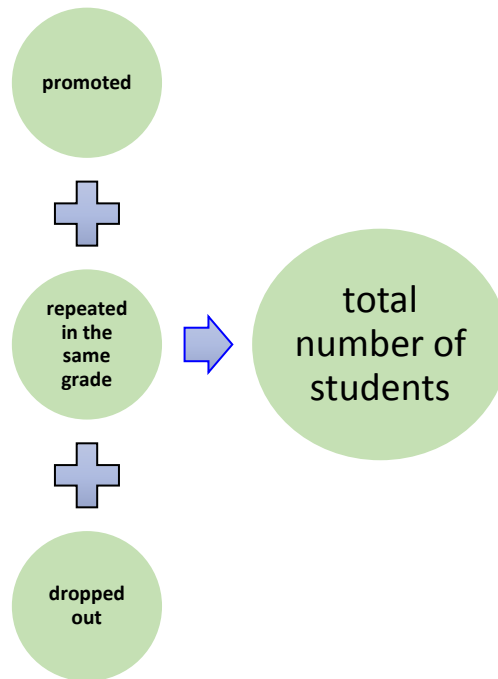


Figure 2. 9. Manandhar and Sthapit (2012): Cohort study of school completion and dropout

The table below presents the key features of the studies discussed in this section.

Table 2. 2 Studies discussed in 2.13

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Dancer & Rammohan (2007)	Survey data (administered to married females aged 18-49) obtained from NDHS. Full information on schooling and household characteristics was available for 7464 children aged 6-17. Results compared to OLS regression and Tobit models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -having better educated parents increases the probability of attending schooling for both boys and girls, maternal education has a relatively greater effect on girls' continuity in school - maternal secondary education increases children's school attainment; mother's secondary education increases the likelihood of having an extra 0.19 years of schooling -a child whose father is a manual labourer has 0.15 years less schooling than the child whose father is in agriculture. - Hinduism being the religion the parents follow significantly increases the number of years of schooling for boys but has the opposite effect on girls 	<p>Some questions that need Explanation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how were 7464 children selected? -no explanation of how manual labour differs from agriculture as findings make a distinction in this. -What effect might other occupations have ? -how do the household size and the proportion of daughters increase numbers of schooling? What proportion of daughters may be helpful? -how was the household wealth index created?
Oster & Thornton (2009)	Sample of 198 adolescent girls and their mothers. Survey questionnaire and FGD for baseline data. Control group and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the use of modern sanitary products results in a 0.021 %-point increase in the attendance on school days when girls have their period, which amounts to an increase of 0.5 days of school per year - Although there was a difference in school attendance during the time they have their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -what is the rationale behind the inclusion of mothers in the study? -on what basis were the particular schools chosen? -why were girls asked to record activities of the first

	<p>experimental group of respondents.</p> <p>Observation follow-up for 15 months.</p> <p>Focus group discussion at the end.</p>	<p>period and the time they do not have, there was no significant effects of the use of the menstrual cup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the menstruating girls are 3% points less likely to be in school during their period 	<p>six days of the month as menstruation doesn't occur in the beginning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -what was the variation in completeness of the diary? -how was the influence of the nurse visiting every month minimized? -the use of menstrual cup went from 10% to 60%, but how long did it take ? -how did the use of cup increase the grade of the girls if it did not increase their attendance?
Manandhar & Sthapit (2012)	<p>School attendance record</p> <p>School registers were used to identify the school dropout children in two districts.</p> <p>13 government-run schools and 2 private schools randomly selected from each district. Data entered in SPSS and analysed.</p>	<p>-the parental awareness and community participation in the primary schools are key measures for children's schooling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - out of 841 children enrolled in grade I for the year 2005, only 445 reached grade V in five successive years among them 412 children completed primary education. the primary education completion rate was found to be 48.99% - maximum dropout rate in grade I was 16.49%, which occurred in 2008, girls' highest dropout rate observed was 9.96% in grade I, and least dropout found was 3.94% in grade V for the year 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -why were Chitwan and Nawalparasi districts chosen? - how many dropout students and parents were interviewed? -how were they selected for interview? -how was the qualitative data analysed? The SPSS might have been used for quantitative data. -out of thirty schools, the researchers obtained data from only 19, schools. Why did the rest, 11 schools, not provide data? Did they refuse? Or did they not have any records?

2.15 Studies Undertaken Outside of Nepal

This section includes studies undertaken in India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Botswana and Rwanda. These studies deal with cultural factors, economic issues, family factors, geographical factors and school factors in relation to girl students' school outcome. Physiological factor such as menstruation is also crucial in traditional societies where several taboos regarding menstruation are imposed on menstruating females. In such societies menstruation influences girl students' school attendance and dropout behaviour. The study based in Kenya deals with menstruation.

2.15.1 Girl Students' School Attainment in Bangladesh and India: Family Decision Making Process, Socio-psychological, Cultural and Economic Factors

Below I discuss two studies (Jain, 2006 and Mohanraj, 2010) based in India and one in Bangladesh (Sahidul, 2013). These studies look at the socially constructed role of females and attempt to interpret them in relation to the girl students' educational goal. The common element of focus is that the social structure where these studies were carried out share a similar concept of gendering at home and in schools and have a similar cultural bias toward female education.

'Who makes a decision regarding allocating household resources in regard to children's education' is a crucial question. This question embodies a possibility of 'gender-based differentiation in parental education expectation, household education spending, and school attendance (Tsang, 2002). Parental educational level, occupational situation and cultural practices can have significant influence on the household decision-making process.

Sahidul (2013) focuses on the decision-making process in households and links it to the dropout behaviour for girls in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Mothers do not often make decisions but whenever they do, it helps the girls stay longer in school. Only those mothers can make decision who have education and who can earn themselves. Education thus acts as a liberating agency for women as argued by

radical feminists (Yokozeki, 2009) . Sahidul collected data in 2010 from a sub-district Pirgonj in Bangladesh. He studied the bargaining level of fathers and mothers in the decision-making process for four major household matters: decisions regarding household expenditure, the educational matters of children, household labour for children and health care for children. He estimated a participation index for both fathers and mothers for each of the categories then used logistic regression to see 'how the participation levels of fathers and mothers predicted dropout outcomes for girls. Fathers' and mothers' participation levels indicated diverse effects 'on dropout outcomes'.

The study finds that fathers' and mothers' level of education and employment status determine the bargaining power (for findings in detail see table 4). Sahidul's focus of study and findings are comparable to Dancer & Rammohan (2007), a study based in Nepal with its focus on mother's education and its impact of girl students' schooling. Sahidul puts the parental education and occupation as the background factors that contribute to the decision-making process whereas Dancer & Rammohan explore how the variables such as parental education, specifically mother's level of education, and household wealth interact with boys' and girls' schooling outcomes.

The figure below shows what variables in Sahidul's study predict girl students' school attainment and how they interact with each other.

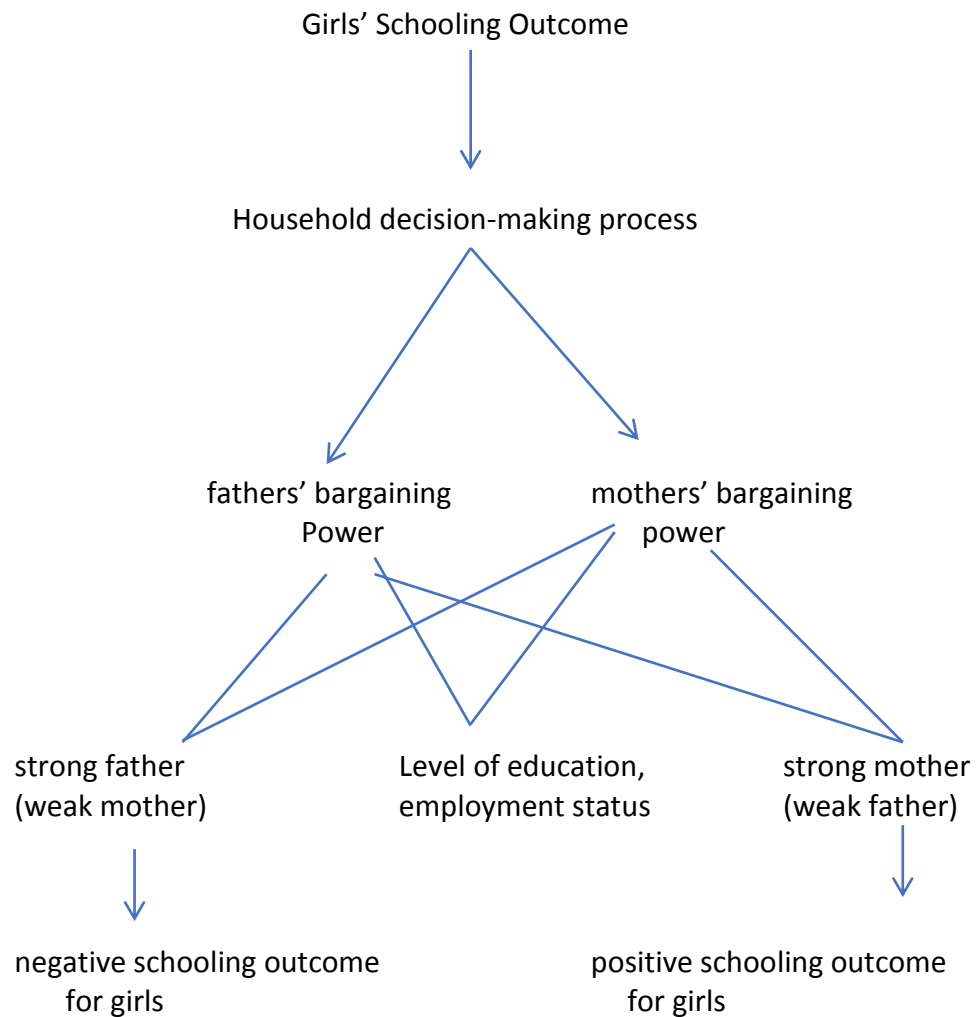


Figure 2. 10. Sahidul (2013): effect of household decision-making process

Jain (2006) looks at the issue of girl students' dropout with broader details taking into account a number of factors and the issue of empowering women. Jain has based the study on 'the field level data from the town of Bareilly' in Uttar Pradesh, India. Before examining the issue, Jain conceptualises the problem under question. The dropout students are:

- i. Those who enrolled in a grade/class/level but did not complete it and left the school.
- ii. Those who failed the final examinations and did not come back.

- iii. Those who passed a grade but did not get enrolled in another grade.
(the researcher excluded the students who obtained Transfer Certificate before leaving the school)

Jain notes that only the economic factors are not enough to answer the question 'why though at the primary level there no major sex difference regarding the dropout rate is, at the upper primary and secondary levels, girls hugely outnumber boys' regarding dropout. Her findings (Table 4 and Figure 10) cover a broad socio-educational spectrum, clustering various factors into three inclusive categories: socio-psychological, educational and economic factors.

While Sahidul's bargaining model includes parental literacy/educational level and parents' employment status in the focal point of its analysis and interpretation, Jain goes beyond that pulling out all possible threads interacting with each other in relation to girl students' educational attainment. The figure below displays what variables Jain correlates to interpret the phenomenon of female dropout.

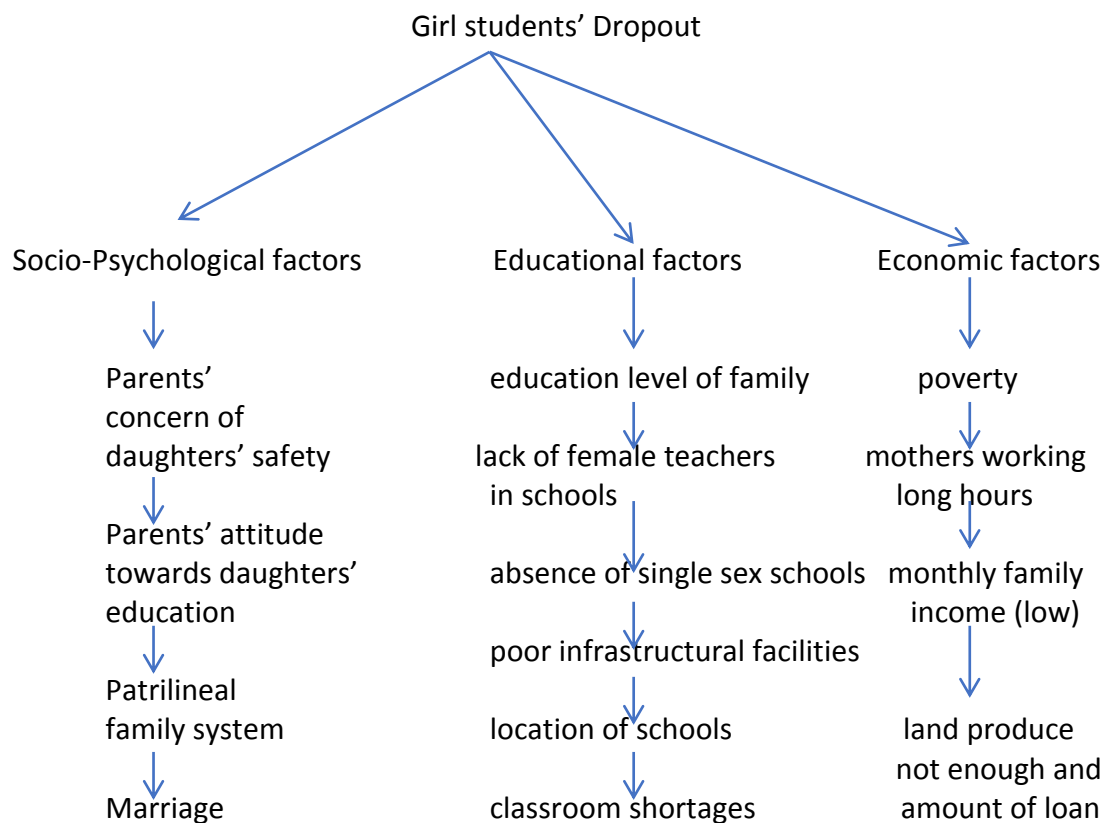


Figure 2. 11. Jain (2006): effect of socio-psychological, educational and economic factors

Why school age girls remain out of school putting female literacy rate lower levels at all times than the male literacy rate is a crucial issue. Mohanraj (2010) like Jain (2006) examines this issue gathering evidence from central India. Mohanraj aims to find why all girls of school-going age in rural Madhya Pradesh, India are not in school. The official documents and data show that girls' participation in schooling has increased significantly and this is due to the implementation of the government's incentive provision. The researcher explores the reliability and validity of this claim, unfolding the socio-economic and family influences on school-age females.

Several studies included in this review find how young age girls are burdened with household chores so as to discontinue their schooling. Mohanraj selects the Ratlam district, which had a population with various disadvantaged social groups such as Schedule Tribes (ST), General Caste (GC), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Schedule Caste (SC). Three villages were selected in the district on the basis of their low enrolment of girls and the high number of out-of-school girls based on the official data provided by the Education department of the district. The three villages had a mixed geographical character as one of them was close to the urban area and two others were remote villages.

This study, as in Rothchild (2005), finds gender role as a determining factor for girl students' school entry and the question of attainment or dropping out (for findings see table 4). The incentive offered by the government was not enough to motivate parents. Parents did not make a strong link between those incentives and sending their daughters to school. While discussing socialist feminist perspective, Stromquist (1990) argued that state acted as an agent that contributed to perpetuate gender inequality in terms of educational attainment. Figure 12 displays three independent variables discussed in the Mohanraj study which influence girl students' dropout.

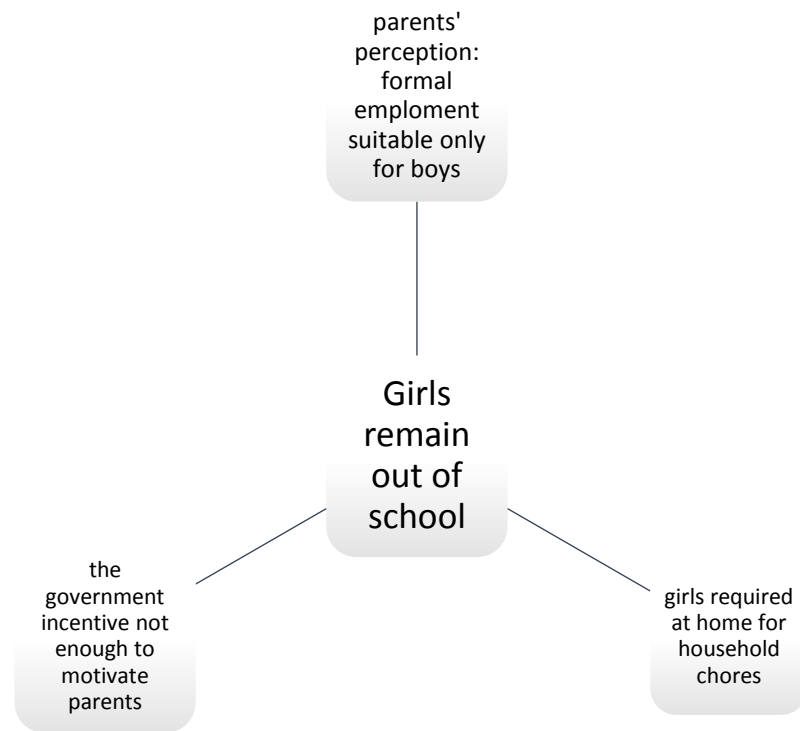


Figure 2. 12. Mohanraj (2010): three major factors affecting girls' schooling

The table below summarizes the methodology and results of the studies discussed in this section:

Table 2. 3 Summary of the studies discussed in 2.14.1

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Sahidul(2013)	Face to Face Interviews: 268 parents of dropout and non-dropout girls, fathers and mothers separately interviewed, 5-point Likert scale in which responses sought for four household issues: household expenditure, children's education, household labour for children and children's healthcare. Logistic regression used for analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mothers participate less than fathers in the household decision making process - fathers had more education than mothers so they have greater bargaining power than mothers - An increase in fathers' participation in household decision-making increases the likelihood of girls dropping out - mothers' participation decreases the likelihood of daughters dropping out - other background variables such as parents' education and income levels also had a significant impact on girl students' dropout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -description of how Sahidul selected 5 schools and 268 parents is missing. Did he randomly choose the parents from school record? Did parents volunteer or did he sample in a systematic way? -Did he have adequate sampling in each combination to carry out logical regression? -how was the education level of fathers and mothers determined? -what was the rationale behind choosing Rangpur District? - no inclusion of pupils so no chance of analysing their perception.
Jain (2006)	Location of study: Bareilly city, Uttar Pradesh, India. Samples: dropout girls, school principals and teachers and parents' of the dropout girls. In-depth interview. A number of questions asked on different topics such as accommodation, electricity, socio-economic cultural and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in primary classes 4.7 per cent of boys and 13.1 per cent of girls dropped out, in the Secondary Classes 3.5 per cent of boys and 7.3 per cent of girls dropped out. In the Intermediate Classes 2.4 per cent of boys and 5.3 per cent of girls dropped out. Hence the total percent of dropout of boys in the urban area of Bareilly was 3.75 per cent and that of girls was 7.76 per cent - socio-psychological factors: religion, patrilineal family system, marriage, family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were the interviews recorded and transcribed or did the researcher take entire note of it? -why were respondents chosen only from urban areas of Bareilly? If some of them were from rural areas outside Bareilly, would the result be different? -among the list of factors responsible for dropout, Jain does not indicate, which one is the most important and which one the least.

	political status, family size, earning, loans-taken, land-holding in relation to their children's schooling.	<p>organization, parents' attitude towards girls' education (only 16% parents wanted their daughters to study as much as they can), social evils such as rape of minors, parents' concern about the safety of their daughters</p> <p>-educational factors are: educational level of the family (79% mothers of the dropout girls included in the study were illiterate), absence of female teachers in school, absence of single-sex schools, location of school more than two kilometres from home, inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor infrastructural facilities (lack of library, laboratory, electric bulbs and fans, inadequate furniture, lack of play area), classroom shortages in schools (classrooms overcrowded or classes held outdoors) and lack of separate toilets for girls</p> <p>- economic factor such as poverty has caused lower literacy and fewer years of schooling, lower enrolment and higher dropout rates; mothers working longer.</p>	<p>-Jain assumes that those who have taken transfer certificates, must have enrolled somewhere, and does not explore any of such cases to see if the girls has actually continued studies elsewhere.</p> <p>-selection bias seen as the district she chose for the study is her home district.</p>
Mohanraj (2010)	Location: Ratlam district, Madhyapradesh, India. Three villages and 13 households with dropout girls in them included.	- when the girls were too young, parents of the sample villages wanted them to go to school, as they could not do any work at home. As they grow up, they are withdrawn from the school	<p>-how does feminist theoretical framework work in this study? (no convincing explanation)</p> <p>-sampling of the village was based on district record, the truthfulness of</p>

	<p>35 girls and their parents, 3 teachers, and 5 administrators were interviewed.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Topics of interviews: status of girls' education, reasons for girls remaining out of school, customary practices, traditions, beliefs and cultural factors prevalent in the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the reasons for withdrawing girls from school often expressed by the parent respondents: required at home to help, to take care of younger siblings, grown up, labour, required at home as the elder sister went to the in-laws, no middle school in the village - parents send boys to school and keep them up to a higher degree so that they will be in formal employment and support them, according to them a job was not suitable for girls/women - the incentive such as free textbooks, free uniforms, mid-day meals and attendance scholarships have been found to be encouraging but not robust enough to motivate all the girls to get to school 	<p>which the researcher questions herself in the article.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in the district 52% girls were out of school, is it one of the highest rates? - why did the researcher choose the second lowest in female literacy but not the lowest one? -how many villages were there in the Sailana block? The researcher says that the villages chosen had a low enrolment of girls but does not say if they had the lowest enrolment among all the villages. -the researcher conducted three FGD's but does not say how many participants were in each group, what issues came up and how they were analysed. -the role and responsibility of the research assistant is not clearly explained: how many interviews did the RA conduct? -which particular castes were categorized as general caste (GC), OBC (Other Backward Castes), SC (Schedule Caste) and ST (Schedule Tribe)?
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2.15.2 Girl Students' School Attainment in Botswana: Mothers' Work Commitments and Socio-economic Problems

Two studies discussed in this section, both based in Botswana, focus on different social complexities that come in the way of girl students' educational goals. In each of the locations in Botswana, traditional social context, poor economic status and gender bias have caused the problem. The studies discussed here reveal that the problem exists because the age-old 'hierarchies in kinship and family structure' (Baruah, 2005, p. 682) continue to serve men's interests and allow greater bargaining power to men.

Fuller et al. (1995) explores similar socio-cultural and household related issues as Jain (2006). But the approach is different and the measures are different. Jain (2006) explores the factors, as many as she could find, that influence the access and retention of girl students, whereas Fuller et al. (1995) looks at how certain factors such as parents' work commitments and household resources affect daughters' educational attainment. Fuller et al. uses certain models based on the factors set down before the interviews were conducted, whereas Jain finds the categories and themes after analysing the data collected from the interviews.

Fuller et al. (1995) presumes that parents' social preferences and work commitments that come before 'choosing between work or school for their children' co-vary with economic factors (p 670). Some studies carried out in impoverished settings claim that 'parents' preferences linked to child development or schooling can vary independently of the family's economic circumstances (p. 658).' Taking into consideration these alternative explanations of family behaviour in southern Africa, the researchers 'assess the relative influence of mother's economic resources and work commitments on their daughters' probability of staying in school.

This empirical study of daughters' school attainment in southern Africa first applies a basic *family-economy* model to contemporary households. Then it studies a broader model that focuses on *gender-specific elements* and finally assesses a family-institution model which adds the social commitments of the mothers to further

explain daughters' school attainment. Then the researchers turn to the specific conditions found within rural Botswana villages to technically specify the three models.

Fuller et al. finds that mothers, when they control the allocation of family resources, tend to support their daughters' schooling more equitably relative to that of their sons. This finding enhances the radical feminist perspective that education delivers a power to girls and women to liberate themselves from subordination (Yokozeki, 2009). This finding of Fuller et al. (1995) is comparable to Sahidul (2013), which finds a better bargaining power of mothers who are in control of household resources. The following figure presents the essence of Fuller et al.'s argument and findings.

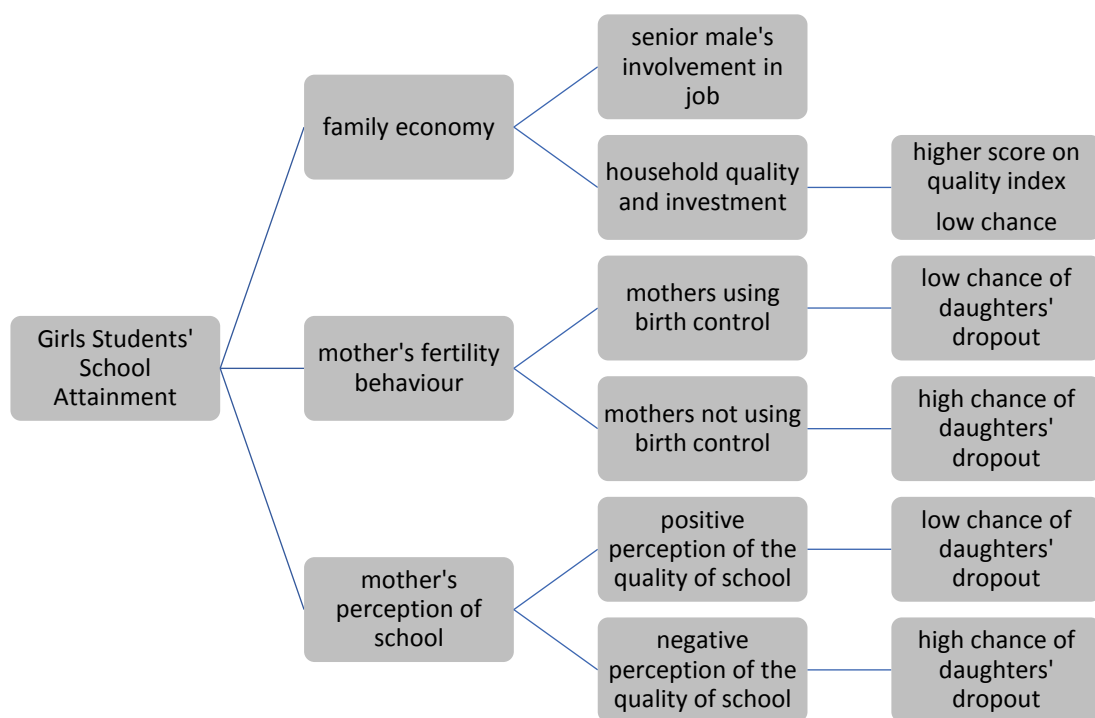


Figure 2. 13. Fuller et al. (1995): effect of family economy, mother's fertility behaviour and perception of school

Makwinja-Morara (2009) conducts a study in a small area called Gaborone in Botswana attempting to explore the socio-economic forces that affect young girls in such a way that they dropout from schools. An important fact that this study reveals regarding the flaw in the education system is that 'the acquisition of education was

associated solely with job preparation, rather than as a vehicle for the development of a well-rounded individual empowered with life and survival skills. The main cause of dropout in this part of Botswana was pregnancy. This research unfolds other school related and social factors such as classroom practices, poverty, illness or death in the family, early marriage and so on.

Household economy is a crucial determining factor (Fuller et al, 1995, LeVine, 2006, Dancer & Ramohan, 2007, Jain, 2006). The Makwinja-Morara study makes it clear that young girls fall into odds because of frail economic household status. There is the lure of electronic devices such as mobile phones and a modern way of living and there are economic constraints. This conflicting situation pushes young girls into sexual liaison from which they get pregnant.

Parents' involvement in children's education, counselling, lack of adult guidance and motivational factors have been taken into account. The village sampled for the research had child headed families, which clearly shows that children needed to decide about themselves. The question is: how does the lack of adult guidance affect girls more than boys? The researcher does not explain this in a distinctive way. The key aspect of the finding of this study is about motivation and parental involvement, as Manandhar & Sthapit's longitudinal analysis points out in the context of Nepal. The following figure summarises the key elements of the findings of the Makwinja-Morara study below:

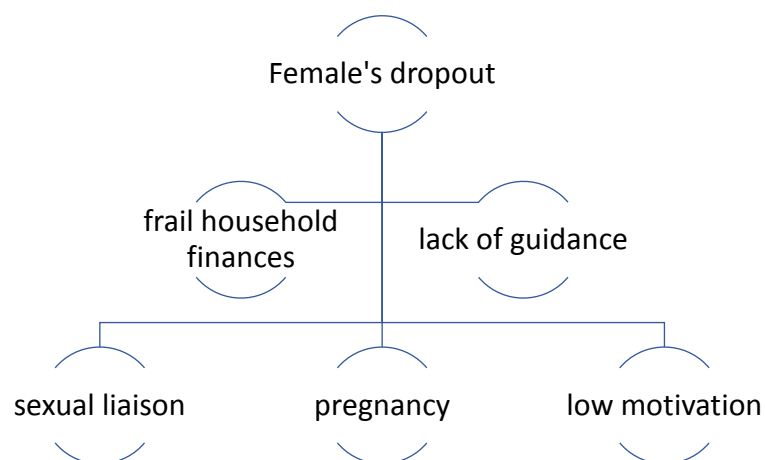


Figure 2. 14. Makwinja-Morara. (2009): factors responsible for dropout

The table in the following page presents the summary of the studies discussed in this section.

Table 2. 4 Summary of the Studies Discussed in 2.14.2

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Fuller et al. (1995)	Data collected from four villages in Northern and Southern Botswana, Interviews and Survey, interviews conducted with 122 mothers each with a daughter of school age, forced choice and open-ended questions, mothers' perception of school quality tested, household economy index created.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -mothers, when they control the allocation of family resources, tend to support their daughters' schooling more equitably relative to that of their sons - the probability of dropping out is lower among families with higher scores on the household-quality index -two beliefs linked to schooling and fertility behaviour were consistently related to daughters' school attainment: how the mothers perceived the quality of the local secondary school, and whether the mother used a birth control device - girls with mothers who do not use birth control are twice as likely to leave school - the mother's preference for a more obedient daughter raises the probability that the daughter will leave school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no explanation why the researchers chose 4 villages (2+2) from the northern and southern regions and why not from eastern or western regions of Botswana. - about selection of 122 mothers for in-depth interview: how they were chosen for the study? Were they randomly selected from the official records, from the school's record book or from somewhere else? - the researchers describe that they included 15 mothers whose daughters were in school and 15 mothers from the neighbouring households whose daughters were out of school. The question is were these 30 belonged to the group of 122 mothers who were selected for in-depth interviews or were they entirely different? -how does the finding about the 34% household own bicycle relate to daughters' schooling? How would the birth control device and daughters school attainment relate? - the research does not include any male members from the daughters' family and does

			<p>not include any member of staff from the school. So there's no chance of comparison.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the researcher does not explain some of the technical jargon such as 'mother's social commitment' for general readers.
<p>Makwinja-Morara (2009)</p>	<p>Samples taken from two sites: a junior secondary school and an organisation that helped dropped out young mothers, 24 participants selected from two locations (4 dropouts, 1 public administrator, 7 teachers, 6 students, 1 Adolescent Centre manager, five mothers from Adolescent Centre. Primary method of data collection: interview, observation, document study and case study</p>	<p>-teaching was found to be authoritarian, teacher-centred, the counselling system dealt only with misbehaviour but never with female students' retention in school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pregnancy is the main reason for dropout in Lekadiba School. The girls were made sexually active by social pressure. - HIV AIDS brought death and bereavement in the family, children suffered lack of guidance -Children left school to look after the sick family members - many parents were not involved in their children's education, which also caused dropout -lack of guidance, child headed family were other reasons for the girl students' dropout -the public schools had re-admission policy for the young mothers, but they did not have a follow-up system in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the researcher does not describe how many schools there were in Botswana and why the particular school was selected. - is the school chosen for the case study the same from where the participants were selected? -Makwinja-Morara does not describe the selection process for 24 respondents. Were they randomly selected or was there any other method? - Morara describes that the social workers' role is crucial because they visit homes for counselling. But these social workers have not been selected as participants of this study. - the school counsellor's role is significant in the school. The researcher has not included the counsellor in the participant of this study. -the researcher does not make clear how HIV AIDS should affect girls more than the boys.

2.15.3 Girl Students' School Attainment in Kenya: Gender Role and Menstruation

Girl students' low school attainment evidently shows an educational gender gap. Norton & Tomal (2009) agree the 'educational gender gap is still large' in most countries in South and West Asia and North and Sub-Saharan Africa (p.962). Statistically, women attain only a 40%–75% the level of education of men (Schultz 1993, in Norton & Tomal, 2009). Two studies incorporated in this section, Seka (2012) and McMahon et al (2011), approach the issue of girl students' school attainment and educational gender gap from two different perspectives. Both studies are based in Kenya. Whereas Seka (2012) looks for the school related factors to determine female students' educational gain, McMahon et al (2011) attempt to measure the extent with which the adolescent girls' school outcome is affected by menstruation. Both studies include similar samples in two different locations of Kenya and the findings reveal the issues related to the constraints resulting from traditional gender values.

Seka (2012) attempts to find what school related factors the adolescent girls cope with; and how such factors force them to quit their schooling. When they are in school they are in the process of psychological and physiological maturation (Cronsoe & Huston, 2007). Seka finds that a number of elements in school and gender norms that exist in the educational arena work against them (for findings See Table 6). The following figure reflects the findings of this study related to girl students' school attainment.

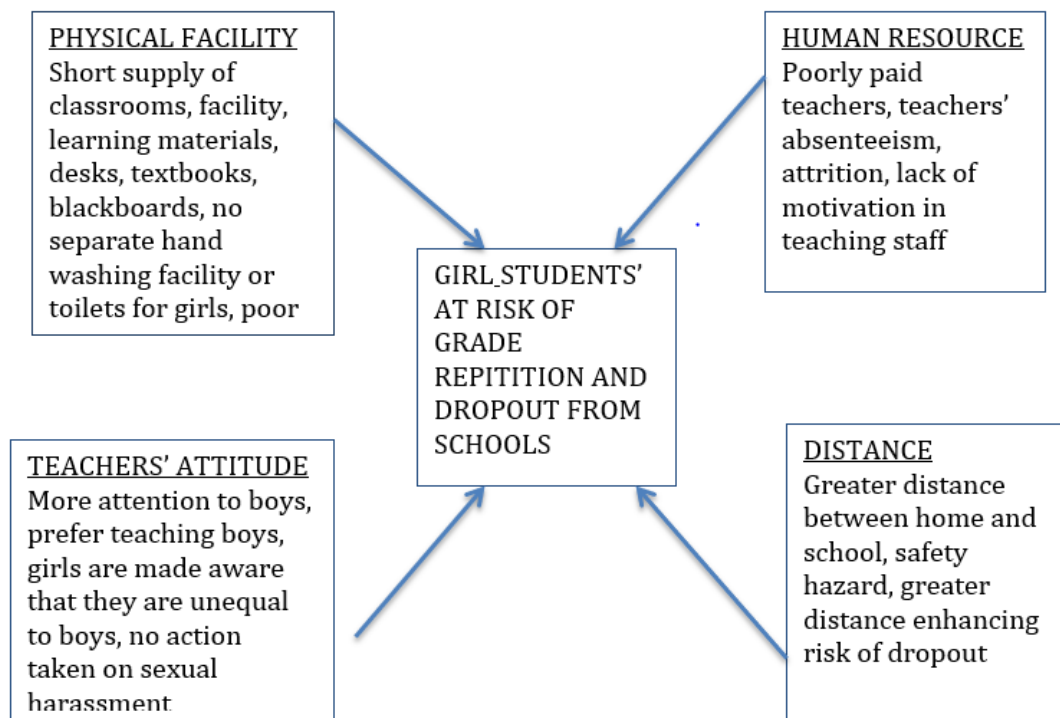


Figure 2. 15. Seka (2012): what causes grade repetition and dropout?

McMahon et al. (2011) is a study that focuses its research, based on Nyanza Province of Kenya, on menstruation and girl students' school attainment. Two studies included in this literature review have looked at this physiological factor and its impact on girl students schooling. Oster & Thornton (2009) administered intervention to menstruating girls in Nepal to see the effect of modern sanitary products on school attendance. The study found that the use of modern sanitary products had least effect on girl students' schooling. 'Interestingly, academic studies on the impacts of improved sanitary towel access (or menstruation more generally) on girls' school attendance have produced rather contradictory results whilst highlighting other important influences on attendance (Krik and Sommer, 2006; Scott et al, 2009; Grant et al, 2010; Sommer 2010a; McMahon et al, 2011; Muvea, 2011; Oster and Thornton, 2011 in Jewitt & Ryley, 2014, p. 138).

McMahon et al. (2011) however focuses on menstruation management: how the girls manage it and what impact it will have on their school attendance. This study also attempts to see the psychological condition of a girl in her period and cultural practices that surround menstruation. Her conclusion is in line with Sommer's (2010) argument that when menstruating girls continue their schooling, 'a collision occurs in school environment that continue to be gender discriminatory' resulting in 'an unnecessary, and preventable, interruption to girls' active school participation and attendance' (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014, p. 138).

The findings of this study (See Table 6) reveal how the adolescent girls are affected by periods eventually. Socio-psychological factors are foregrounded by the respondent girls and teachers during their interviews. The social problem about menstruation is that the subject is pushed to the background and considered a topic unsuitable for open discussion. Lack of information about it makes the girls suffer as the 'gendered relation' is reinforced through menstruation.

The figure below shows how the factors surrounding menstruation in terms of school attendance relate to each other.

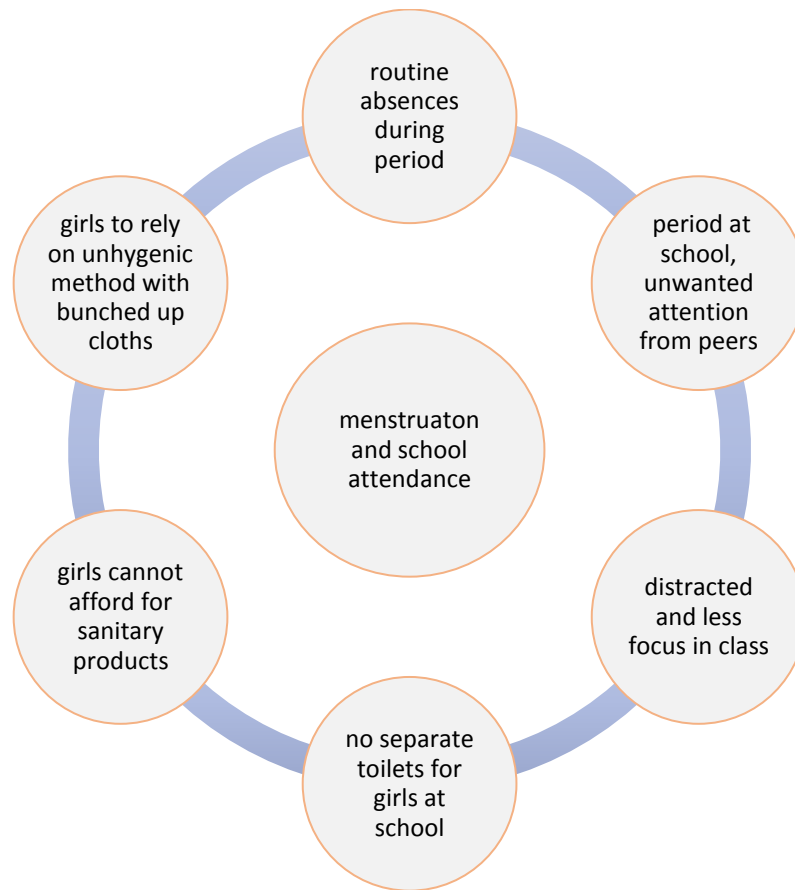


Figure 2. 16. McMahon et al. (2011): menstruation and socio-psychological factors

The table on the following page presents the key features of the studies discussed in this section.

Table 2. 5 Key Points of the Studies Discussed in 2.14.3

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Seka (2012)	<p>Study carried out in Kasarani District of Nairobi province, Kenya.</p> <p>Structured Questionnaire for structured responses and open-ended questions to elicit more information. Questions about school factors, causes of dropout and home school distance.</p> <p>Sample size: 229 five schools out of seven in the district selected through random sampling. 14 teachers selected through simple random sampling. Seven head teachers from all schools selected through census sampling. 210 students selected through random sampling.</p>	<p>-60% of the respondents agreed about discrimination of girls in schools</p> <p>-majority of respondents think discriminatory treatment against girls at schools influence dropout</p> <p>-69% respondents agreed that the teachers demoralized the girl students at school</p> <p>-69% of the respondents believed that teachers think girls' education is not important. This means that teachers have a negative attitude towards girls' education</p> <p>-72% of the respondents think that the school environment is not safe</p> <p>- teachers prefer teaching boys and girls are made aware that they are unequal to boys</p> <p>-55% of girls cover a distance of zero to five kilometres to go to the school; 45% girls cover six to 11 kilometres. The distance is also a determining factor for girls' staying in school</p>	<p>-why was the district chosen?</p> <p>-why was the survey questionnaire chosen as an effective tool for this study?</p> <p>-discrepancy in number of head teachers sampled for the study. At one place it is mentioned as seven and in another it is five</p> <p>-the researcher says that teachers were sampled randomly and also says teachers were sampled because they were long enough in the job and had knowledge of the cohorts. On which criterion were teachers selected?</p> <p>-of teachers interviewed, how many were male and how many female?</p> <p>- in findings: 60% agreed about discrimination of girls in schools. What kind of discrimination is it? Is it felt while teaching, or not supporting the girls in the learning activities or by discriminatory assessment?</p> <p>-69% respondents agreed about the demoralising of girls. How were the girls demoralised?</p> <p>- the findings regarding the safety at school is not clear. The researcher mentions an</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the greater the distance between home and school, the higher will be the chance of girls' dropout 	<p>unsafe environment for girls at schools as one of the causes of dropout. She links this to the issue of sanitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - another finding is that majority of teachers preferred teaching boys. The number of teachers mentioned is 51%. This is not significantly different from half and cannot be counted as majority.
McMahon et al. (2011)	<p>Study carried out in Nyanza Province of Kenya. 48 girls selected for six focus groups. Nine teachers for in-depth interview. In FGD, a moderator and note taker involved. The discussion also recorded. Systematic analysis included reading of transcripts and debriefing - and manual coding of the narratives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -initially, girls try to face the menstruation while in school, later they give up, miss school routinely, 'in anticipation of menstruation' -the reason for fear: they might have bloodstain in their clothes and may be 'stigmatized by peers' - the most common feeling towards menstruation is shame, fear and distraction as the general feeling was that 'menstruation is somehow bad' - some teachers were found supporting while others punished girls for leaving school early - in general teachers had 'more pragmatic concern about menstruating girls being distracted and less focused while in class. - poverty is main factor: the girls cannot use modern sanitary pads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -parents' voice not included in the study although parents is the major factor to know how this issue is managed in the community - researchers do not identify and include the girls who had stopped coming to school - How was the ethical question about the observation on menstruation resolved? -were the moderator and note taker the locals trained for the purpose? (No information) - there were two females conducting the discussion and it was also recorded. What is their result based on? - of nine teachers interviewed, how many were male and how many female? -what was the rationale behind two phases of data collection? Did the researchers have fixed quota, which was not fulfilled in the first phase?

		<p>School environment is not congenial as there are not enough toilet and bathroom facilities</p> <p>- social problem: it is difficult to discuss it in school, at home and in the neighbourhood</p>	<p>-were the number of girls in focus group evenly distributed (eight of them in each group)?</p> <p>-were they taken from rural and urban areas equally? nature of sampling not clear.</p> <p>- how were the codes or themes arrived at? The paper says they did the manual coding, but who decided what codes were?</p>
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2.15.4 Girl Students' School Attainment in Rwanda, Israel and Belize: Location Specific Factors

Three studies are discussed in this section: Gahima (2012), Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) and Anderson-Fye (2010). Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) and Anderson-Fye (2010) isolate the causal effects of different independent variables such as conflicting traditional/modern norms and push/pull factors to measure the impact on female students' school attainment. Gahima (2012) explores the issue through a stakeholders' perspective. Interview is the major instrument for these studies that are based in three different socio-cultural environments. In Rwanda, the study location for Gahima (2012) and Israel, the location for Anderson-Fye (2010), the parents attempt to retain traditional gender relations. However, in Belize, where Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) conducts her research, the schoolgirls themselves challenge traditional gender relations. But these challenges always function within, but more often are conditioned by the dynamics of social circumstances.

The major problems surround the phenomenon of girl children's school access and retention. Gahima (2012) aims to explore the issue of access and retention of girls across Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) level in two districts of Rwanda through different groups of stakeholders' perspectives. These groups consist of educationist group (Headteachers, Teachers and Education Officers), NGO group, parent group, Learner group (pupils in school), and girl dropout group (girls who had dropped out of school).

Gahima finds that various factors interact negatively in relation to the access and retention of girl students. Different groups perceive the issue in different ways. While one group highlighted in-school issues such as teachers' concepts of gender roles, the other dwelt on government policy and its implementation. The importance of the presence of female teachers at school was also highlighted. Most importantly, a collaborative approach was the concern of many. The figure below presents the causal factors discussed by various groups of participants included in this study.

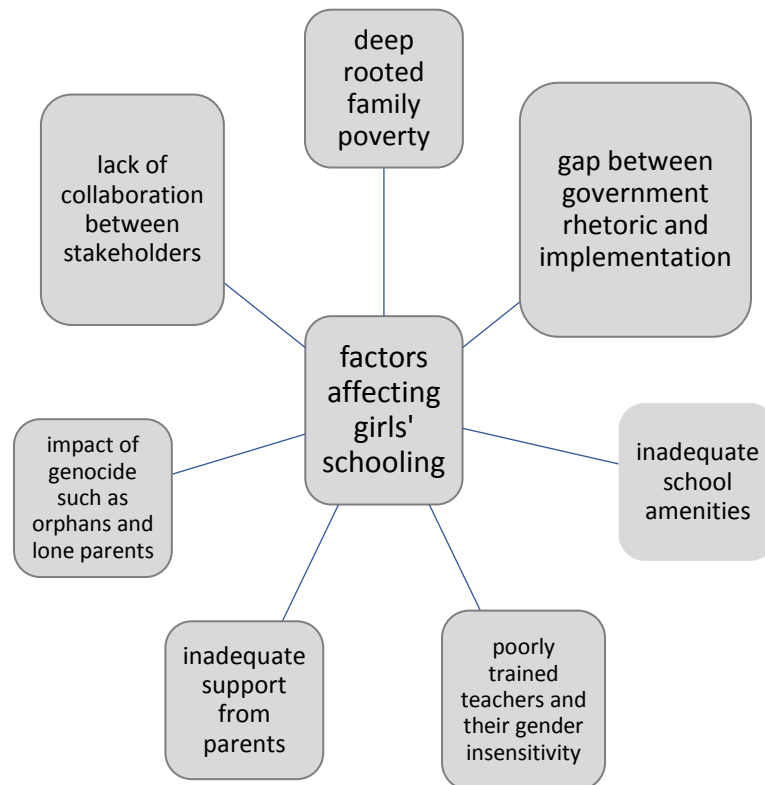


Figure 2. 17. Gahima (2012): factors influencing dropout

Gahima not only discussed accountability with the stakeholders' groups, but also asked questions about solutions. The participants showed variation in their responses. These were based on causal factors at home, in the socio-cultural environment, educational institutions and government rhetoric and policy and the aspect of implementation. The figure below presents solutions suggested by different groups of stakeholders:

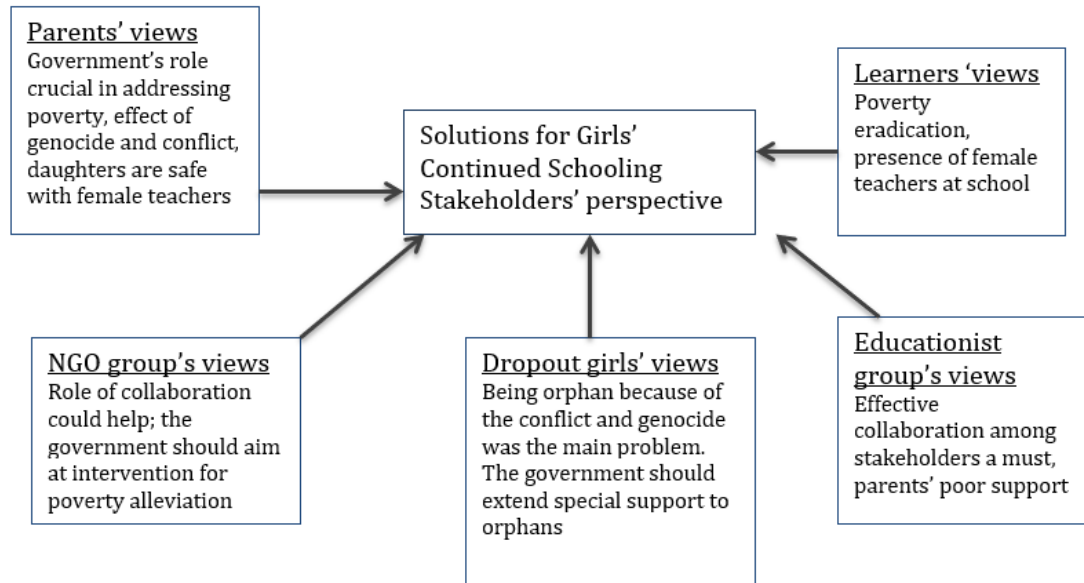


Figure 2. 18. Gahima (2012): solution for girls' continued schooling

Queder (2006) delves into an area most other studies have ignored. She aimed to find out how traditional values regarding the honour and prestige of a girl student is negotiated within the modern space of public schools. The less educated parents struggled to compromise the freedom for their daughters at the cost of honour and prestige. Queder's data reveal that the problem of girls' dropout is caused by the 'conflict between the modern Israeli institutes' perception of modernity (which promotes co-education) and the Bedouin traditions that remain the cultural ethos of the girls' fathers' (p.3).

Queder challenges the approach of the international agencies, who run modernising projects in the local area of Negev, Israel, where she locates her study. These projects wanted to change the beliefs of the indigenous people resulting in 'a disregard of cultural insensitivity'(p.8). But Queder finds that the traditional ethos of the local Bedouin can find its place within the modern space of co-education schools. The findings of Queder (2006) study are presented in the figure below:

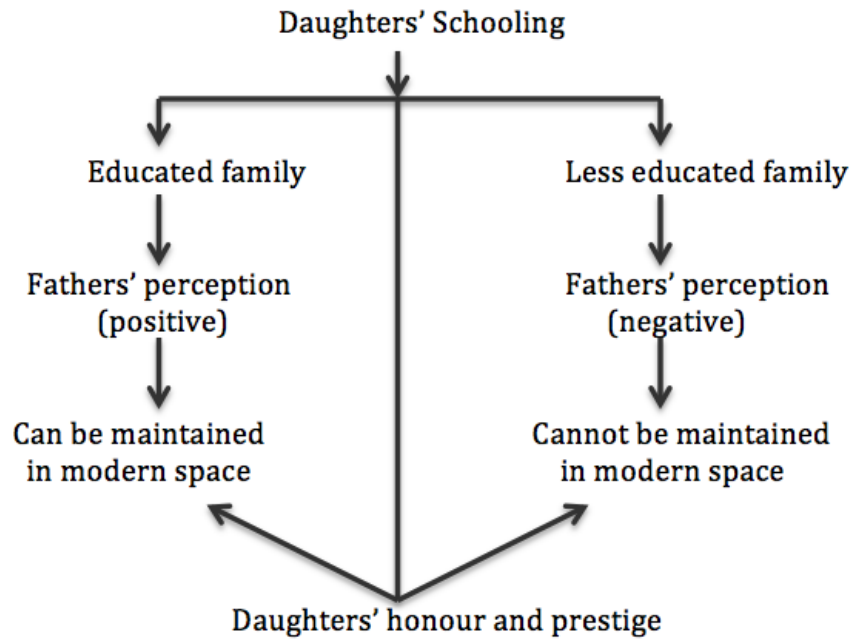


Figure 2. 19. Queder (2006): traditional ethos and modern spaces

Unlike most of the studies that centre round girl students' school attainment and dropout, Anderson-Fye (2010) involves participants who present positive examples of educational success. Her study location is San Andres High School (SAHS) in Belize. Anderson-Fye finds that 'many of the young women in this study saw education as a route to independence or a way to avoid gender-based maltreatment for themselves and their future children (*Ibid.*, p.174)' in a way 'radical feminists accept that education provides tool to release women from subordination' (Yokozeki, 2009, p.47). Gender inequalities generally declined with economic growth because of opportunities created by expanding markets (Charles 1992, Clark, Ramsbey and Adler 1991 in Norton and Tomal, 2009). Anderson-Fye terms the maltreatment at home as a 'push' factor, which is combined with the 'pull' factors of 'increased economic opportunities for young women with high school diplomas'.

The 'push' and 'pull' factors provide an important interpretation of 'subjective motivation' in the Anderson-Fye study. In studies such as Rothchild (2005), Sahidul (2013), Mohanraj (2010), and Seka (2012) based in the rural parts of the developing world, there is a clear presence of 'push' factors, but not enough 'pull' factors. The

constraints at home and school are found to have widened the gender gap, causing girl students' dropout. The Anderson-Fye study provides an opportunity for comparison with studies that explore factors responsible for incompleteness and dropout. The figure here gives a glimpse of the elements discussed by Anderson-Fye.

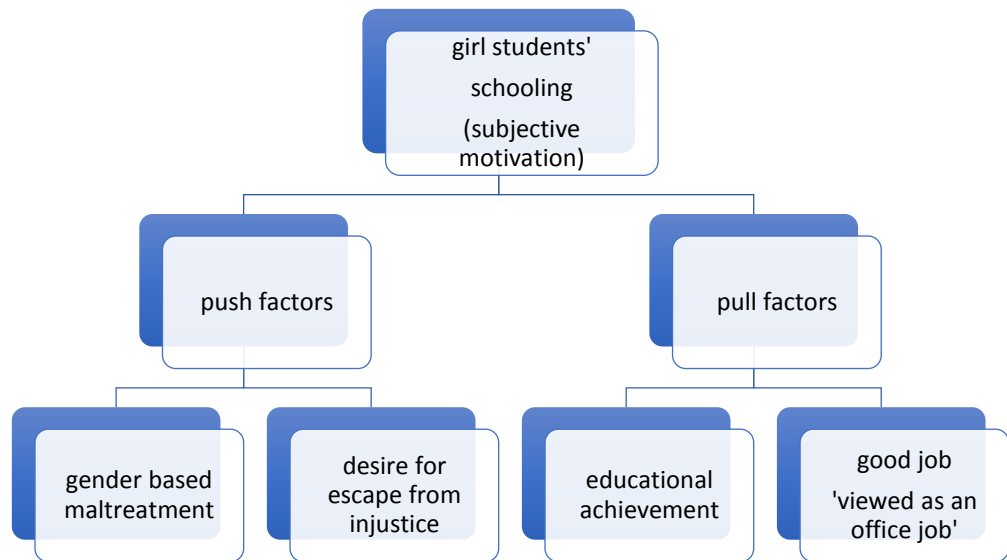


Figure 2. 20. Anderson-Fye (2010): push and pull factors and girls schooling

The details of methodology, findings and critiques of the studies reviewed in this section are given in the following table:

Table 2. 6 Summary of Three Studies Discussed in 2.14.4

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Gahima (2012)	<p>Location of study: two districts, one from Northern Province, the other from Eastern Province of Rwanda</p> <p>4 Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) schools selected (2 from each district).</p> <p>Method of data collection: in-depth interview</p> <p>150 participants interviewed, stratified purposive sampling: 4 head teachers, 20 teachers, 4 members of PTA, 80 pupils, 2 people from local education authority, 12 parents, 4 representatives of community women groups, 2 senior members of FAWE-Rwanda, 20 dropout girls, 4 people from NGO's, 2 high ranking officials</p>	<p>-access and retention is affected by the discrepancy seen between the government policy rhetoric and its reflection in practice (educationist group of people viewed)</p> <p>- in school issues: poorly trained teachers and their gender insensitivity, inadequate school funding, school amenities such as separate toilets for girls</p> <p>-parents' poor involvement and their emphasis on traditional cultural gender positioning</p> <p>- women teachers and the roles played by them can positively impact retention of girls</p> <p>-long lasting conflict and genocide left the society with deep-rooted family poverty, caused girls to miss school, girls were raped and infected with HIV and AIDS.</p> <p>- parents and teachers stressed that poverty is the most important impediment to girls' schooling because the direct, indirect and opportunity</p>	<p>-20 girls (10 from primary 5 and 10 from senior 2) were included from each school. No information about the selection criterion/method for those pupils among many others. Did Gahima go to the class, explain the research and ask who were interested to take part in it? Or, was it by done by drawing lots?</p> <p>- no information about how many teachers there were and how the researcher selected five.</p> <p>-why were the family of the dropout girls excluded from sampling?</p> <p>- of the interviews with 80 pupils conducted by the research assistants, how many groups did each of the two assistants conduct? Or did they both conduct all interviews together?</p> <p>- the researcher finds a list of factors that influence the girls' schooling, but does not say which factor is most influential and which one less.</p> <p>-a useful finding: female teachers can play a positive part in girls retention is an interesting finding. But, is there any evidence to prove this finding?</p>

		<p>costs of having girls in school are not supportable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the educationists group stressed effective collaboration among stakeholders as a solution - the Rwandan society lacks the social concepts of equality, equity and parity - teachers also stated that girls' domestic labour functioned as a form of detriment to their continued schooling 	
Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006)	<p>Location of Study: Negev region of Israel.</p> <p>Method of data collection: Ethnographic Interviews</p> <p>Participants: two groups of girls and their parents, those in school and those dropped out</p> <p>Total number of participants: 50</p> <p>Each group contained 10 girls, 10 mothers and 5 fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -girls' honour and prestige was of deep concern of mothers and also a number of fathers advocated it - the parents whose girls were still in school also placed the girls' honour at the top they took it simply as a condition - fathers of the schoolgirls acknowledged the need of modern mixed space for their daughters. They 'embed local traditions within the modern space'. -the educated and less educated family had contradicting views regarding education and freedom: less educated parents perceived that 'honour and traditional norms... cannot be maintained in the modern space' whereas the educated parents thought it possible. 	<p>-Queder describes how she selected the dropout girls. As for the girls in schools, she simply says she accessed the girls in school through local schools, but she does not explain the method she used for selecting 17-year-old girls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how did Queder inquire about the parents' educational background and how she divided them into two groups: educated and less educated? No explanation of it. - also not clear: Were the educated group of parents the parents of girls in school and less educated parents the parents of dropout girls? Or were they completely different parents? If they were different, how were they sampled?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the importance of parental support vital. - the only reason for dropping out was to keep the daughters' honour intact. Both parents accepted this as opposed to more generous parents whose daughters were still in school - the preference of the less educated family parents was for a separate school for girls. They perceive this as a 'viable solution' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as the sample size as small as 10 girls and divided into two groups, it is difficult to draw conclusion
Anderson-Fye (2010)	<p>Location of Study: San Andres High School (SAHS), Belize</p> <p>Method of data collection: Interviews, daily participant-observation, archival research</p> <p>The interviews contained three layers of interview: i) open-ended ethnographic interviews with sixty of the eighty high school girls enrolled during the 1996-1997 school year ii) thirty-two in-depth cross-sectional interviews with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In earlier days (during the 1970s) of SAHS boys graduated more than girls, but by the 1990s more girls than boys graduated yearly. In the decade from 1990/1991 to 1999/2000, 143 girls and 100 boys graduated from SAHS, though the entry rate was similar. -For the years with complete data, the average longitudinal four-year attrition rate for boys was 45%, for girls 29%, with most of the students who dropped out leaving in the first year. Cross-sectionally, Anderson-Fye found that 185 boys entered the high school and 83 graduated, while 170 girls entered and 100 graduated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The researcher says the interviews were conducted with school administrators and teachers, the national minister of education, local politicians, and community members, which included parents, high school graduates and high school dropouts, but details of this missing. No mention of the number of respondents in each category and also how they were selected. - Sixty of the eighty of them were interviewed (open-ended) but how were they selected? - Likewise, eight of them from each of the four grades were selected for in-

	<p>eight girls from each of the four grade levels during the same year iii) four longitudinal interviews each with twelve girls over five years.</p> <p>Anderson-Fye also followed approximately one-half of the other sixty girls ethnographically and with less structured interviews.</p>	<p>-The girls' subjective motivation towards independence was a strong 'push' factor and the desire of getting a 'good job' (an office job) was a major 'pull' factor</p> <p>- Another factor that influenced the young girls' success was a desire to escape from an abusive atmosphere at home, by step-fathers.</p> <p>- Being a witness of the abuse at home also influenced the young girls</p>	<p>depth cross-sectional interview, what was the selection procedure?</p> <p>-In the same way, another group of twelve girls were interviewed longitudinally over five years, but how they were included as samples.</p> <p>- How was the daily participant observation carried out and how many of the girls included in the observation?</p>
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2.16 Studies Based in the USA and Australia: School Factors and Educational Policy

Seven studies discussed in this section have examined school systems, quality of teacher-student interaction, grade-level examinations, board examinations, teacher-student ratio, curricula and their impact on dropout. These studies are based in the developed world, most of them in the USA. Therefore, the predictors such as Minimum Competency Test, General Equivalent Diploma (GED), Higher Competency Test, and Alternate Pathways might be irrelevant in the Nepalese socio-educational set up. But the variables like pupil teacher ratio, government spending per student, educational policy, and ethnic composition may be of interest and use.

2.16.1 Exit Examinations and Dropout

The studies conducted in the USA show that a huge concern has been shown about the examination system's relation to dropout. These studies aim to find if the high-stake tests such as higher competency tests account for the existing high school dropout rates. Some of the studies have contradictory results. For example, the results of the study by Griffin and Heidorn (1996) conducted in Florida, show that failure on minimum competency test (MCT) significantly increases dropout rates.

Interestingly, the findings of this study indicate that a decision to dropout applies only to the academically bright students. Low achievers are not affected by MCT failure and the minority students' dropout does not correlate with the results of the MCT examinations. But the results of the longitudinal study carried out by Warren and Jenkins (2005) in Texas and Florida are of a contrary nature to Griffin and Heidorn's findings. Warren and Jenkins come to a conclusion that 'the high school exit examinations are not independently responsible for the higher dropout rates'. The type of examinations, whether it is a minimum competency test or higher competency test, has no causal impact on the students' decision to drop out. The study also finds that these examinations do not affect the dropout rates among

different ethnic groups. The figures below present the key findings of the first two studies.

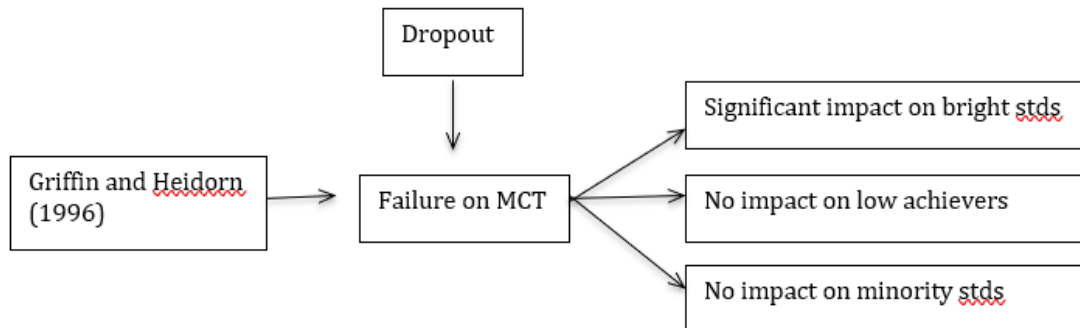


Figure 2. 21. Griffin and Heidorn (1996): failure on MCT and Dropout

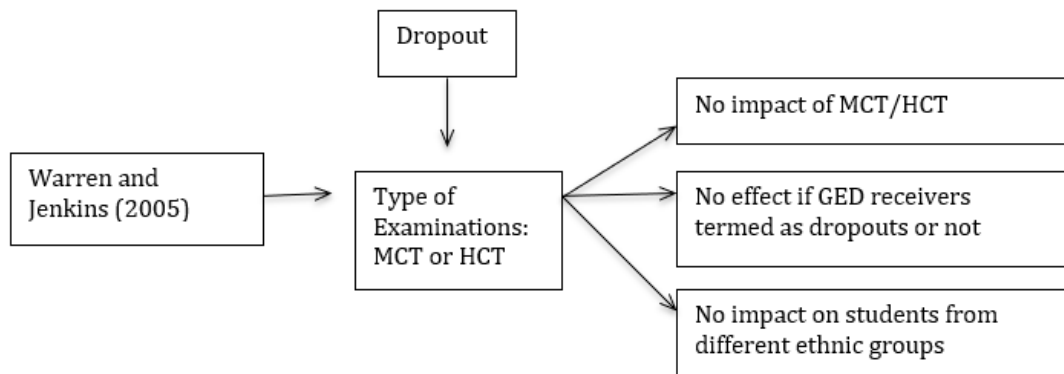


Figure 2. 22. Warren and Jenkins (2005): impact of exit examinations on dropout

The general theoretical speculation of a number of educational researchers is that the requirement of accountability standards for students is responsible for the current state of dropout rates in America. Helmet and Marcotte (2013) support such speculation with the findings of their research, contradicting Warren and Jenkins (2005). Helmet and Marcotte measure the impact of students' exposure to high school exit examinations (HSEEs) and come to a conclusion that HSEE increases dropout rates for 12th graders, with a larger effect seen on African American students. Helmet and Marcotte introduce the gender element in their analysis and

find that females experience larger effects of HSEEs among ethnic groups. The following figure summarises the findings of the Helmet and Marcotte study.

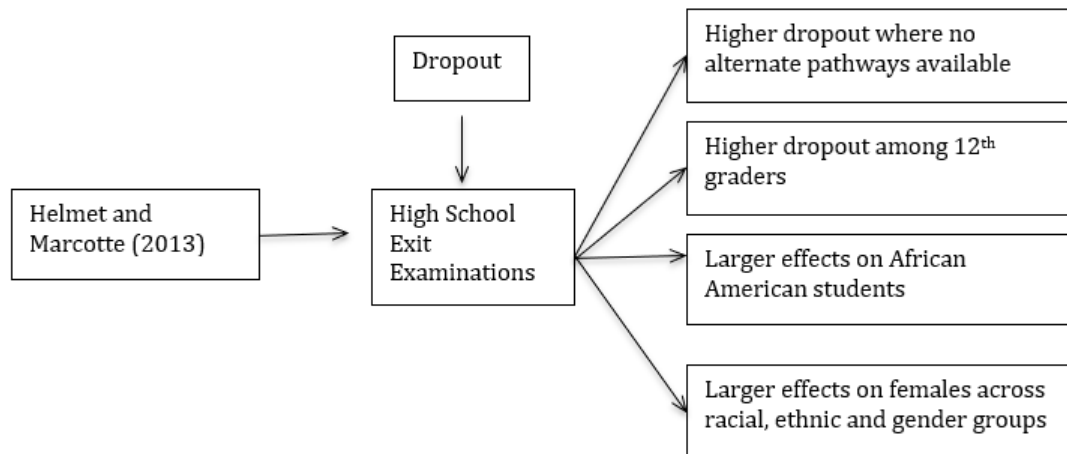


Figure 2. 23. Helmet and Marcotte (2013): HSEE and dropout

Table 2. 7 Summary of the Studies Discussed in 2.15.1

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Griffin and Heidorn (1996)	Data Source: Florida Department of Education, data based on cross-sectional random sample of 14 school districts in Florida, students sample composed 10, 11, 12 grade students of 1990-1991 school year, logistic regression used for analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clear relation between performance on MCT and dropout found. The students who performed poorly on the competency test were more likely to leave school. - Students with higher GPA, or the academically brighter students, if failed MCT, were more likely to dropout. - Academically at-risk students were not statistically more likely to leave school prematurely as a result of failure on the MCT. - MCT performance did not differentially impact minority students' decisions to leave school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Why was Florida chosen as location of Study? -How was racial and ethnic classification determined? -The indicator variables —sex (male/female), Behave (students with behavioural problem, Age (overage), English proficiency— included in regression analysis but no mention in the discussion of findings.
Warren and Jenkins (2005)	Data source: October Current Population Surveys (CPS) files produced by Hauser, Jordan, and Simmons (2002) of the years 1971-2000. Location: Texas and Florida. Nonlinear hierarchical modelling techniques used for analysis	<p><u>High school classes of 1971-2000</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The cases of dropout were found to be dependent on the characteristics such as if their parents owned their own homes, if they lived in two married-adult households and if their household heads are educated. - no evidence that state high school exit examinations are associated with students' high school dropout behaviours. Here the recent GED recipients were not considered as dropouts. <p><u>High School classes of 1991-2000</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What might have been the response rate of the survey? -The researchers question about the exclusion of institutionalise population, did they look for any evidence of such population? -In racial indicators, only white and non-white included -What may be the most and the least significant socio-demographic characteristics that caused dropout if not the exit examinations?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No evidence was found when moving from minimum competency to higher competency test had any bearing on the dropout rate in both Texas and Florida when they considered GED recipients as dropouts. - Whether or not the GED recipients classified as dropouts, the analyses provide no evidence that state high school exit examinations are independently associated with high school dropout -‘coefficients for race/ethnicity, home ownership and household head’s education do not vary by the type of exit examination that students must pass to graduate. 	
Helmet and Marcotte (2013)	<p>Data source: Common Core Data (CCD), the USA-wide data of all public schools and school districts.</p> <p>-First models estimated where outcome is the dropout rate for all students by sex, race and ethnicity. All models estimated using weighted least squares, with students’ enrolment in the grade, district, and year as weights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The average dropout rate was found to be 4.23 percent but it increased with grade level, with 12th graders having the highest average dropout rate, 5.36. -The effect of the HSEE: the exposure to an exit exam increases the 12th grade dropout rate by more than 11 percent. -The dropout effect of HSEE is larger in states that do not provide alternate pathways to receive a diploma or substitute credential for students that cannot pass exit exams. - Across racial and ethnic categories, HSEE effects on 12th graders’ dropout rates are larger for females than males, the case being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If some states allow students to retake HSEE to unlimited times, how does it affect the CCD’s definition of dropout? - What are the characteristics of charter schools and non-charter schools? -Why females among certain ethnic groups outnumber males in dropping out? Is absence of alternative pathways more troublesome to female students? -How do alternate pathways differ from HSEEs?

		<p>more prominent in the states without alternate pathways to graduate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The effects of HSEE with no alternate pathways are statistically equivalent, with 12th grade rates rising 23.0 percent in urban districts, 21.1 percent in suburban, and 24.6 percent in rural districts.	
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2.16.2 Educational Policy, School Factors and Attainment

Four studies discussed here examine educational policy factors such as public spending on education, school factors such as pupil teacher ratio, and the school's academic environment in relation to high school students' likelihood of dropout. The studies aim is to find how the policy and school factors can work towards improving educational outcome. Ainley et al. (1991) attempts to examine students' background factors, and factors related to school systems that encourage students to continue to the higher grades. This study finds that the students' academic achievement and parents' desire for a continued schooling collectively work towards positive school outcome.

Fitzpatric and Yoels (1992) explore the factors that have a direct effect and compositional factors that have an indirect effect on dropout behaviour and find that state policy of educational expenditure, school structure and students' family structure have significant impact on dropout. McNeal (1997) focuses on the nature of school effects on students schooling outcome and arrives at a conclusion that school size, pupil/teacher ratio and social milieu (percentage of minorities) have the strongest impact on students' schooling outcome. Suh and Suh (2006) analyses dropout students' educational engagement factors in relation to their degree attainment and concludes that self-concept motivational factors have long-lasting impact on their success of attaining a degree.

The study carried out by Ainley et al (1991) is based in New South Wales, Australia, in which the background, school and intervening factors were considered in order to study their impact on students' decision to continue their studies. This study finds that the academic achievement factor together with family background factors and parents' expectation predict students' continuation to higher grades. The schools with fewer traditional academic courses and lower proportion of NESB (non-English speaking background) students have been found to have better retention rates. These factors have been presented in the following figure.

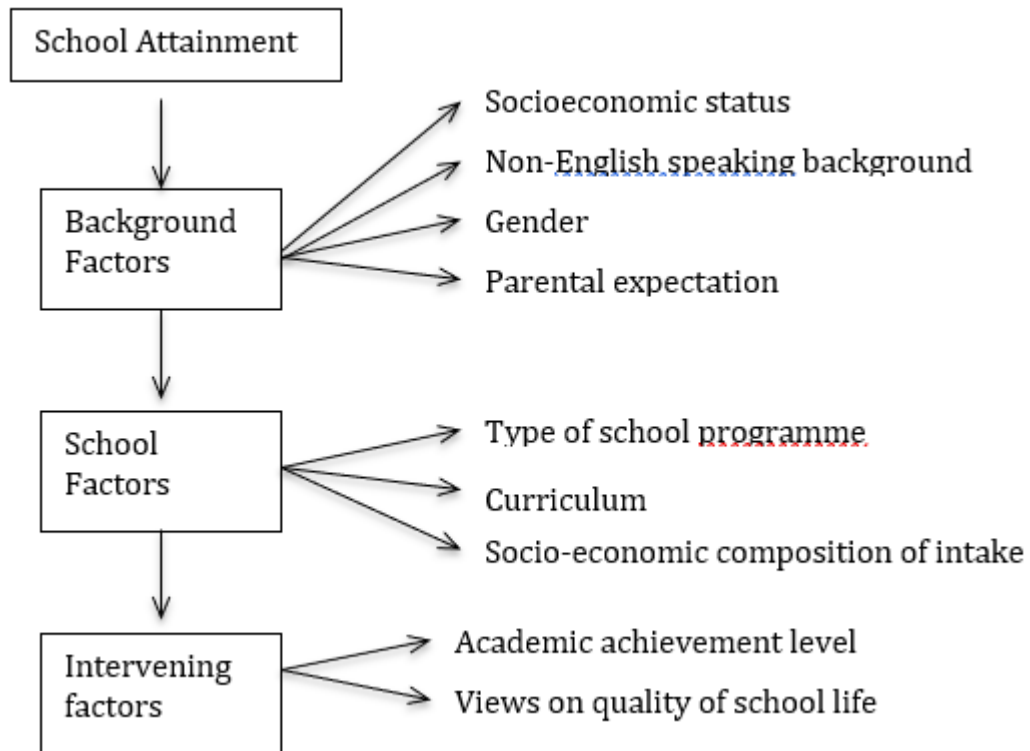


Figure 2. 24. Factors supporting School Attainment

Fitzpatric and Yoels (1992) find that variables such as state policy, school structure and socio-demographic composition have a significant impact on school retention and dropout. This study suggests that the state spending has an impact on school structure composed of teacher pupil ratio and support staff teacher ratio, and the school structure influences students' school attainment. The figure below presents how these variables interact with each other.

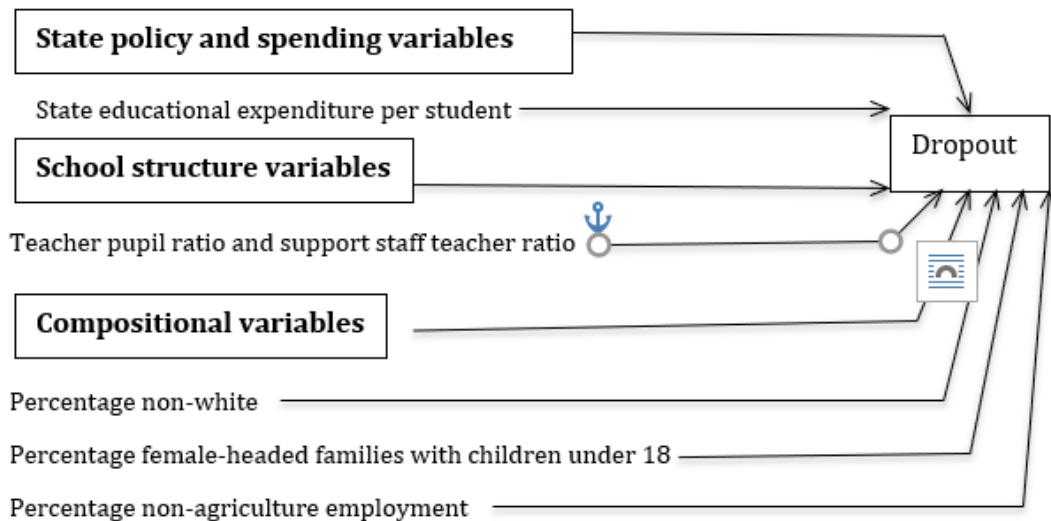


Figure 2. 25. State Policies and Dropout (Fitzpatric and Yoels ,1992)

McNeal (1997) considers school's structural and contextual effects in regard to students' likelihood of dropout. In structural effects, McNeal includes school size, pupil/teacher ratio and the bureaucratic structure of the school administration. In contextual effects, he includes variables such as the student body's social milieu (percentage of minorities), school climate (crime within the school, conflict between and among students and teachers, students' feeling regarding safety), and the academic emphasis of the school. McNeal does not find a significant effect of school climate and academic emphasis on dropping out but finds a significant effect of pupil/teacher ratio, school size and the composition of minorities in the student body. The figure below presents the interaction between the variables McNeal has included in the analysis.

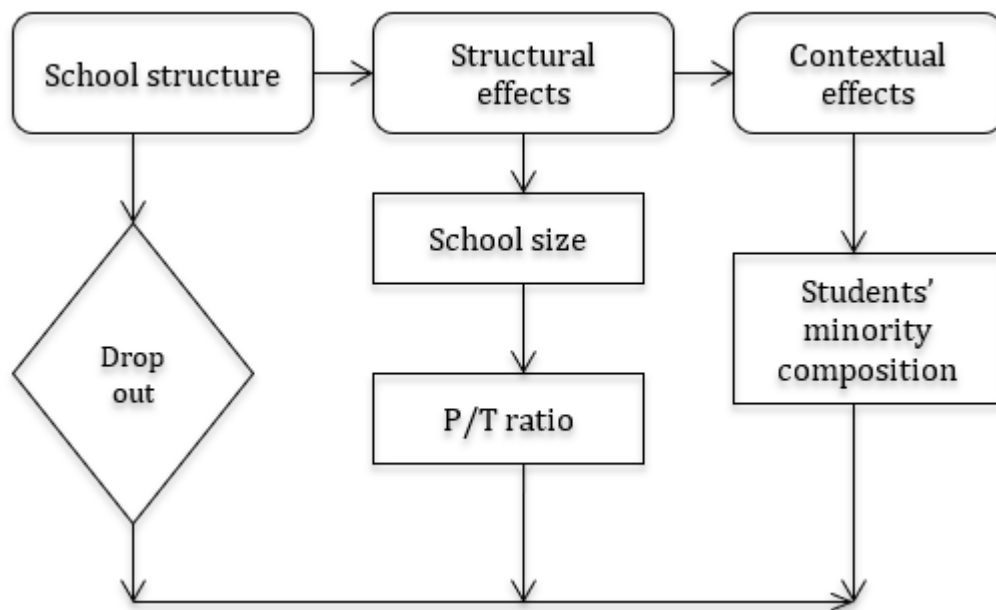


Figure 2. 26. Effect of School Structure on Dropout (McNeal, 1997)

The study conducted in the USA by Suh and Suh (2006) focuses on the possibility of degree attainment for the dropout students. The researchers analyse the correlation between student factors related to educational engagement and finds that there is a significant correlation. Student factors included in the correlation were: desire to achieve educational goals, planning and organisational skills and locus of control. The self-concept motivational factors were found to have a long-lasting impact on degree attainment. Some factors were found to have a temporary effect on students' degree attainment. The figure below presents the factors that have significant and weak correlation with the dropout students' degree attainment.

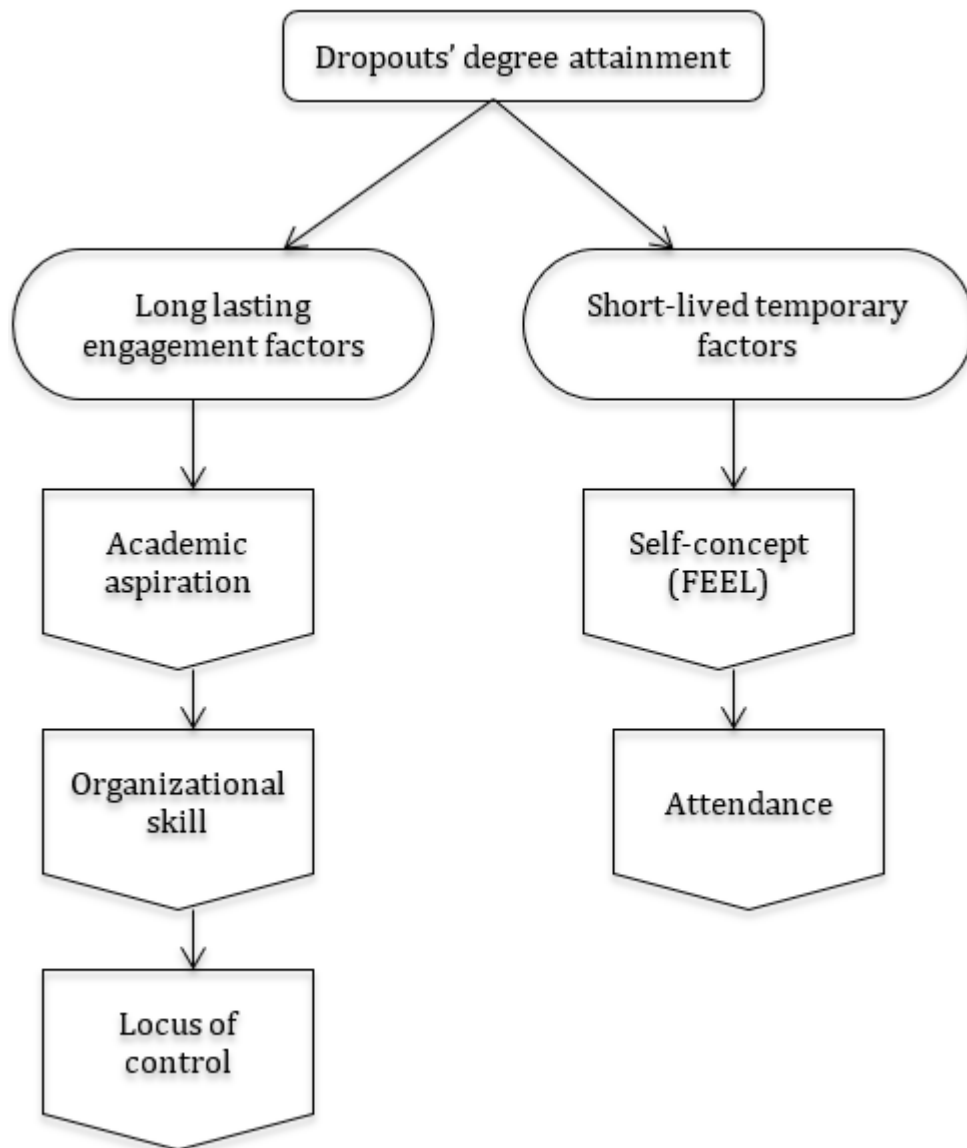


Figure 2. 27. Educational engagement factors (Suh and Suh, 2006)

The following table presents the methodological details, findings and points of critiques of the studies discussed in 5.2. Table 3.8

Table 2. 8 Summary of the Studies Included in 2.15.2

Study	Methodology	Findings	Points of Critique
Ainley et al. (1991)	Location: New South Wales, Australia Quantitative data gathered from 3,000 students who were in Year 9 in the sample of 23 schools, selected for the study out of 372 regular high schools. A series of multiple regression conducted for analysis	-The variables with positive association with school attainment were: achievement, parents' expectations of continued education, and satisfaction with school. - Achievement is enhanced by: parents' expectation of continuation, higher socioeconomic status - Achievement level is same for both male and female students - Non-English-speaking background is also a strong determinant for achievement and satisfaction with school - Gender also played a role in students' decision to stay in school. In this analysis, girls were more likely to stay in school than boys	- Sampling of schools needs more explanation. - The schools were selected on the basis of the retention rate; did the selected school have one of the highest, lowest or average retention rate? - About socioeconomic environment as selection criteria: how many of the total 23 schools were from rural areas and how many from a metropolitan area? - About the size of the schools, what size was considered? And about inclusion of 3000 year 9 students, is this the total number of year 9 students in 23 schools? - Two different numbers for student sample size mentioned: initially 3000 as the sample size, later 3045 students completed the "School and You" questionnaire. - Data about parental expectations gathered only from children.
Fitzpatrick and Yoels (1992)	Location: the USA, Analysis included data from all fifty states.	- Multivariate model of analysis finds that state policy decisions and school structure affect the dropout rates.	- If the southern states have the highest dropout rates, which states have the lowest? No indication of comparison

	<p>Data source: Annual Digest of Education Statistics (NCES, 1978,82) and the State and Metropolitan Area Data Book (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982, 1986)</p> <p>The ordinary least square regression is used to measure the direct effect of state level policy and compositional variables on school structure and the direct and indirect effects of these variables on state-wide dropout rates.</p>	<p>-Family structure also plays crucial role in predicting variation in dropout rates.</p> <p>-State spending measured by ADA also plays a vital role.</p> <p>-The percentage of pupils enrolled in private secondary schools has an indirect effect and needs to be considered.</p> <p>-Region of the country is also a strong predictor of dropout rates as the southern states have the highest dropout rates.</p>	<p>between critical predictors between the highest and lowest rates.</p> <p>- 'The public-school system in the south is different form the system in other parts of the United States'. In what ways is the public-school system in the south different?</p> <p>- In the compositional variables, the racial discrimination has been made between only two groups, white and non-white. No indication of existence of other minority groups of people.</p> <p>- If ADA is a strong predictor, what amount of spending per student may be helpful?</p>
McNeal, 1997	<p>Data source: High School and Beyond (HS&B) data set (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 1983a)</p> <p>Sample size: 5,772 students and 281 schools</p> <p>First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to estimate values for problematic school climate and academic emphasis. Then, each of the school-level concept's impact on</p>	<p>-Pupil/teacher ratio is a strong predictor of dropout rates. It affects students' engagement in the learning process by affecting the quantity and quality of student teacher interaction.</p> <p>- Results also support the view that an increased focus on teaching results in an expected decrease in the likelihood of dropping out.</p> <p>- The results show that there is not a significant relationship between academic press or school climate and a student's likelihood of dropping out.</p>	<p>-How was the data gathering conducted by HS&B?</p> <p>-The researcher explains that the data taken from HS&B went through several filters and reduced to the sample of 11,289 students from 556 schools. How was the filtering done and on what criteria?</p> <p>- Out of subsampled 50 percent schools the researcher excludes five schools due to data quality problems. But what kind of problems occurred?</p> <p>-The researcher then randomly subsamples 50 percent of the schools and</p>

	dropping out was measured	-Greater percentage of minorities in the student body is a strong predictor of dropout.	their students due to data quality problems coming down to the sample of 5,772 students and 281 schools. How does this solve the problem? - The researcher does not mention the name of the state or the location from where the schools were chosen for the study and the rationale for choosing that location.
Suh and Suh, 2006	Data source: NELS:88/00 database conducted by the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Department of Education, USA Sample and data: Longitudinal sample of US students of grade eight in 1988. Interview data from 1988 interviews, then the interview data from 1990, 1992, 1994 and 2000. The sample for this study contains 1430 dropouts among whom 963 youths successfully completed high school diploma or GED. The final dropouts were 467 youths.	-Results of the logistic regression model: 67% of dropouts eventually completed high school education. -Significant correlation seen between degree attainment and education engagement variables such as educational aspiration, organisational skills, locus of control, homework, TV watching. -However, students' feelings and absences were not significantly associated with degree attainment. They have only temporary impact. -Dropout with high expectation of educational gain had a good correlation with degree attainment. 32.4% of the students in the sample were sure they would attain a degree. -Organisational skills showed stronger correlation. One standard deviation	-No clear explanation on sampling: why is it important to select students enrolled in grade eight? Why is the year 1988 important? - 'Six of their statuses were unknown and 256 of them had missing variables.' What kinds of variables were missing and what might be the reason for the unknown status of those six pupils? - What sort of measures was included for the degree attainment and education engagement variables in the crude survey? - That student absences were not correlated with graduation suggests that the measures were weak. - There is no explanation for the process for including sample from different racial backgrounds such as black, white,

	<p>Logistic regression was used for analysis.</p>	<p>increase in the organizational skills raised the likelihood of degree attainment by 35.7%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Locus of control predicted significant differences between completers and non-completers. According to regression co-efficient if a student increases time spent on homework by one hour per week, the possibility of gaining a degree increases by 4.5%.- Similarly, if TV watching is reduced by one hour per day, the likelihood of degree attainment increases by 4.8%.	<p>Hispanic, American Indian, Alaskan Native and Asian Pacific Islander.</p>
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In conclusion, the studies included in this section explore the state policy of public spending on education, exit examinations and various school characteristics in relation to the likelihood of the dropout of students. The racial distinction between white and non-white (Warren and Jenkins, 2005) and different examination systems such as minimum competency tests and higher competency tests (Griffin and Heidorn, 1996) will have little relevance to my focus of study. My study however will look at the impact of school leaving certificate (SLC) examinations, mid-academic year examinations and final examinations on school completion rates. The alternate pathways (Helmet and Marcotte, 2013) provided to the students in the USA is an educational practice which will be a new concept in the Nepalese educational context. The predictors such as school size, pupil/teacher ratio, state policy on public spending on education (Fitzpatric and Yoels, 1992; McNeal, 1997) in relation to the schooling outcome will be relevant to my proposed study in Nepal.

2.17 Methodological Consideration and Points of Critique

More than half the studies selected for literature review used a quantitative approach. Nine studies (detailed in the summary tables) involved qualitative sources of data collection. These studies included and analysed multiple perspectives of reality about female students' schooling. Importantly, 15 of the studies included adult as well as pupil's perspectives. The studies selected from the final phase of selection involved large-scale cohort studies from the developed world, mostly based in the USA. These studies, with their focus on school system, educational policy, examinations in relation to the likelihood of students' dropout, have employed the quantitative approach to data gathering and analysis.

Two studies among all have included only adult participants. For instance, Levine (2006) has included adult females born between 1950-1975 for the interview. Likewise, Sahidul (2013) included parents of dropout girls. Since the voice of the dropped-out girls has been ignored, the validity of the study is questionable. This suggests that the studies that involve all of the parents, teaching professionals and pupils are more convincing. For instance, Jain (2006) includes dropout girls and their

parents, schoolteachers and head teachers, bringing into her research multiple perspectives, with an opportunity of useful triangulation.

Of the studies of a longitudinal nature, Anderson Fye (2010) and Manandhar and Sthapit (2012) look at attrition rates. While Anderson Fye (2010) gives a clear number of boys' and girls' attrition rate separately, Manandhar and Sthapit (2012) lacks precision on comparative rates. Oster & Thornton (2009) studies the adaptation rate of the menstrual cup over fifteen months and its impact on school attendance. The study does not say how long it took for the use of the cup to go from 10% to 60%.

The studies with larger samples might be more representative of the larger population, but this depends on the nature of the sampling framework. If the nature of sampling allows the possibility of representing the universe chosen for the study, it can draw valid inferences. The use of secondary data in larger studies, however, involves ethical issues. Stash & Hannum (2001) includes 24,745 households from all over Nepal. The study uses data from the 1991 Nepal Fertility, Family Planning and Health Survey (NFS). It becomes problematic when the researchers do not supply a clear explanation about ethical permission for using the data. There is little distinction of gender in the large scale quantitative studies conducted in the USA and Australia. These studies also do not explain the ethical issue.

A study with a smaller sample size should indicate limitations regarding generalizability of the findings. The noteworthy example of this type of study is Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006), which includes 20 girls (and their parents) and divides them into two categories. The difficulty in drawing conclusions from ten individuals' perceptions weakens the claims and the findings of the investigation are not transferable.

Several studies included in the review raised certain sampling issues: the sampling procedure was not explained, the rationale behind the choice of location was missing, certain information about an inquiry such as establishing the number of completed years of education of a household head was missing, information about

the proportion of male and female participants was not given and so on. Maxwell (2005) points out that 'a flawed design leads to poor operation'. When the instruments used to draw conclusions were not clearly defined, the conclusions may not be reliable. For instance, Stash and Hannum (2001) do not describe how the completed years of education of household heads was worked out and how the possession index was prepared, Manandhar and Sthapit (2012) do not indicate how many parents were interviewed and how qualitative data was analysed, Sahidul (2013) does not describe how the parents were selected and how their education level was determined, McMahon et al. (2011) does not explain whether the conclusions were drawn from the recorded script or the discussion conducted by two ladies.

Comparison and triangulation of perceptions of the participants are useful for drawing conclusions. Some studies limit this possibility by selecting only urban or rural locations or including participants featuring only one kind of background factor. Rothchild's (2005) study has useful findings about the educational gender gap in Nepal, but is based only on a rural location. Jain (2006) provides fresh insights on the problem of girl students' dropout in India, but includes participants only from the urban areas of Bareilly. LeVine (2006) does not include participant mothers from the lower rank of the Hindu caste hierarchy- what was the situation of literacy amongst mothers from marginalized caste groups? Dancer and Rammohan (2007) correlate the parental occupation, a background factor, with children's schooling, but the study includes only two kinds of occupational backgrounds: manual labourer and agriculture. It overlooks the possibility of comparison with other occupation categories such as office worker, teachers, doctors, nurses and so on.

2.17.1 Contribution of Critique of Relevant Literature to the Present Study Design

The literature review not only provided a picture of what has been studied so far in the field of female literacy and female students' school attainment, but also an idea of how research can easily slip into flaws. The major action points derived from the review of prior studies, which are applicable to my proposed study are summarised below:

- Supply a convincing rationale for choice of location.
- Think ahead which participants might offer insightful views and perceptions.
- Make a decision on the kind of sampling suitable for the research and a good selection of sampling method.
- Include a good mixture of samples relevant to the area of research: male/female, urban/rural, well off/poor, high caste/low caste, which will enhance the possibility of 'extensive collection of data' (Creswell, 2007) for triangulation.
- Consider ethical issues as an important part of research process and describe them fully.
- Make sure that measures or instruments used are suitable for the research and their validity and reliability is not questionable.
- Describe the process of the research very clearly so other researchers can identify exactly what was done and what was not done, and any flaws can be identified.
- Employ a systematic 'data analysis procedures of significant statements, meanings, themes and an exhaustive description of the essence of the phenomenon' (Creswell, 2007) of girl students' dropout. Provide the rationale for the choice of this form of analysis.
- Report all results including those which do not fit comfortably with initial hypotheses.
- Conduct the research in a systematic way.

2.17.2 Areas Overlooked by the Existing Literature/ Gaps

Figure 20 presented in the preceding section has put major factors together discussed in all preceding sections. The issue of gendering is evident in all levels of education and all kinds of socio-cultural situations. Family economy has been discussed at length as a strong predictor. Parental education, family decision making process and status of maternal bargaining power have been presented as influential factors in girl students' schooling.

Gaps are seen in the school side. Nepali education system involves formal examination as a key method of students' assessment. The assessment system conflicts with the learning ability of students. If a student fails a grade, there is no choice but to repeat the same grade for another year. That involves educational investment from the parents' side for an additional year of study. What impact may such a system have on the problem of school dropout? There is a possibility of parents facing a challenge of making a decision. The gender role suggested by relevant studies may come into play at this moment.

This literature review gives an opportunity to find where the focus of existing studies has been weak. In the context of Nepal, none of the previous studies have looked at educational issues in depth in relation to girl students' school attainment. The proposed study aims to focus on the impact of curriculum orientation, teaching and assessment system and school related factors on girl students' school outcome, focusing on the problem of dropout.

2.18 Conclusion

The studies examined in this literature review cover a wide range of perspectives related to female students' school outcome and the problem of dropout. The educational gender gap has been perceived from various angles and perspectives. Findings of the studies reviewed in this chapter re-introduce the debate around patriarchy, power relations, discriminatory labour division as causes of the gender inequality with a significant impact on female students' schooling outcome. These issues were vehemently raised by the modern feminist gender theorists in socio-cultural and educational context in the later half of the 20th century. Anderson-Fye (2010) finds that girls in Belize use education as a route to independence from sexual abuse and domestic violence. The argument that education provided a tool for liberty for females was introduced by radical feminists such as Spender (1982) and Mahony (1987). The inequality between genders has been institutionalised in the socio-educational contexts of the developing world for long. Several studies such as Rothchild (2005), LeVine (2006), Jain (2008), Mohanraj (2010), Dancer and

Rammohan (2007), Sahidul (2013) and Seka (2012) findings confirm that cultural and socio-economic forces interact with gender, class differentiation and patriarchal family values to affect female students' education. The studies find that the change is taking place, but it is slow, and there is a need of more study and action.

Although the findings of the studies are relevant to the particular contexts of the locations of the studies, the variables are of a universal nature. The aim of the studies, by far, is to achieve equity and justice in educational participation and achievement. This literature review provides me with an opportunity to acknowledge their contribution and assess where I can situate my proposed study to extend the body of knowledge with the results of my proposed research (discussed in 5.3).

The figure below presents the major factors and findings found in all the studies discussed in this literature review. They are assembled and put under two broad categories 'positive factors' leading the girl students to educational success and 'negative factors' leading to discontinuity and dropout.

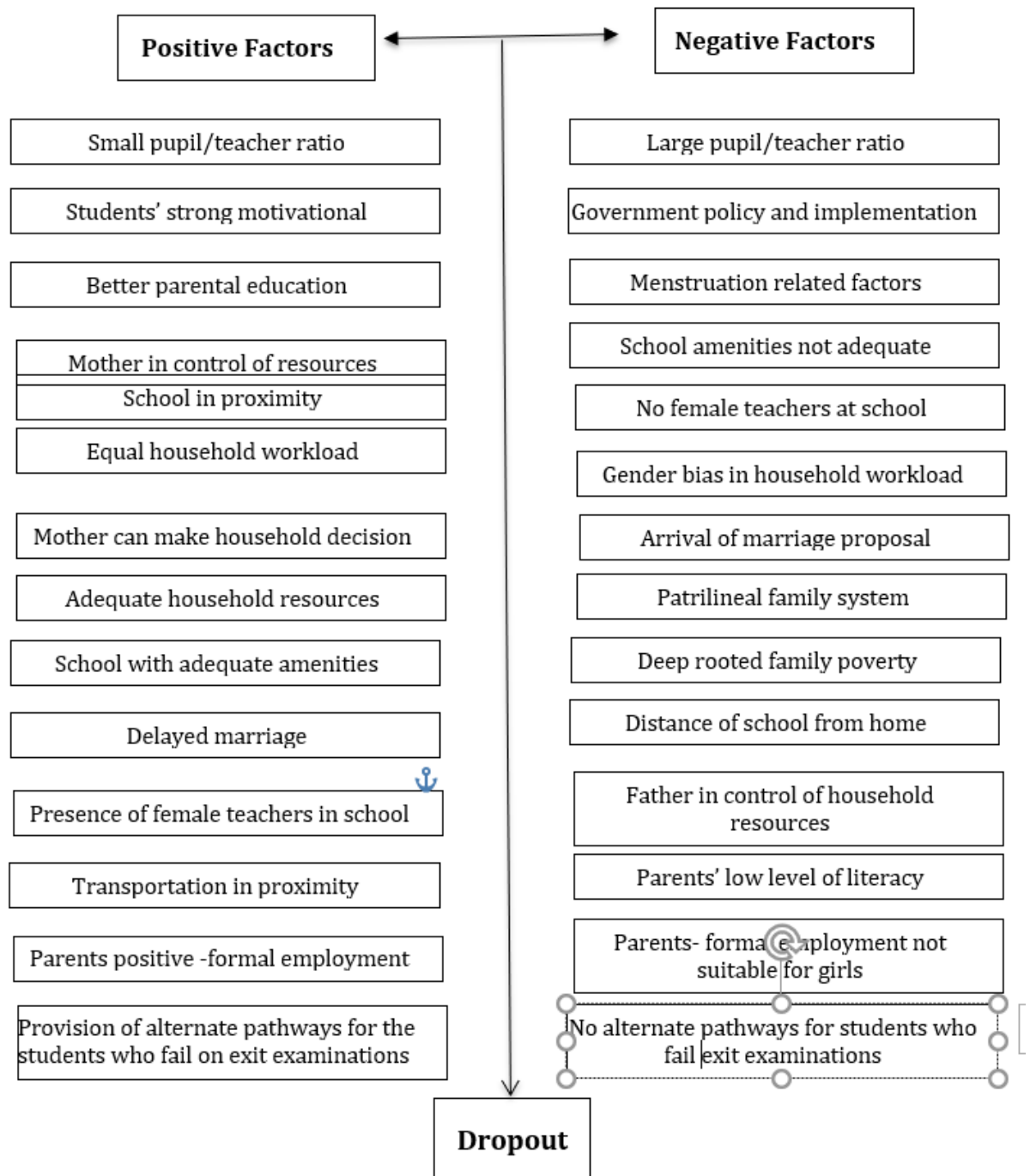


Figure 2. 28. Summing up: positive and negative factors

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The systematic review of literature (previous chapter) has critically observed the methodology utilised by studies that explored the issue of school dropout, both in the underdeveloped and developed world. The review revealed a gap in the existing body of literature which helped refine the research questions for this study.

This chapter describes the methodological approach this study adopted to address female students' dropout in Nepal. The Ministry of Education statistical report shows that the problem of dropout is everywhere in the country both among boys and girls. However, studies reveal that females' position in Nepalese socio-cultural and educational spheres is something that require more studies and action.

The review of previous studies revealed that most of the existing studies had their focus on the effect of socio-cultural constraints on school attainment. This author decided that educational issues were equally important. For that reason, this study has its focus on the effect of the school system on female students' dropout. But at the same time, it does not ignore socio-cultural factors, because the issues related to the socio-cultural context and school environment are inseparable. It is worth looking at the research questions presented in the previous chapter once again.

Main Research Question:

Main Question:

- What impact do the school system, teaching and assessment have on high school girl students' likelihood of dropout?

Sub questions:

- Is there any conflict between the norms and values inherent in the school system and the target of learning outcome set by the curriculum?

- Is there any link between the formal examination system and girl students' dropout?
- What socio-cultural factors cause girl students to abandon their schooling early?

3.2. Research Design

This section presents the overall design of this research which includes the theoretical orientation and epistemological stance, research methods and ethics and ethical permission. The section describes what strategy the researcher employs to gain knowledge about the issue in question.

3.2.1 World View and Epistemological Stance

The researcher's perspective on making sense of reality determines his/her methods to explore the research question. Two prominent world views existing in the area of research are: Objectivism and Constructivism. Objectivism is 'an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors'. And constructivism 'is an ..ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors' (Grix, 2002, p.177).

Bryman (2001) argues that objectivists 'follow natural science by testing theories and hypotheses' (p.27). They approach reality with predefined tools and an argument that the truth is objective and measurable. Researchers adopting this position are in the quest for objectivity. Therefore, they try to maintain a 'distance between the researcher and those studied so that biases can be avoided' (Bryman, 2001, P. 455). According to Robson and McCartan (2011), these researchers tend to utilise the quantitative research paradigm.

On the other hand, constructivists believe that knowledge of reality is experiential and linked to the person who knows it (Sallatin et al., 2007). They adopt an

interpretive stance in approaching reality with a belief 'that the task of the researcher is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge' (Robson & McCartan, 2011). This stance allows the researcher to gain an 'understanding of different social contexts within which interactions and relations between actors and institutions are carried out' (Grix, 2002, p.183). Holloway and Brown (2012) argue that the researchers adopting this approach tend to utilise the qualitative research paradigm.

Pearce (2015) argues that if there is not one objective truth, then a researcher will need to take a subjective point of view in observing and listening to participants. However, there is certainly room for mixing different variants of epistemology and ontology (Pearce, 2015) with a focus on the social phenomenon under investigation. There is a growing use and acceptance of such integrative methodology (Evans et al., 2011) which involves both kinds of methods – qualitative and quantitative.

The issue of female students' dropout is complex in nature. Therefore, it is important to look into issues related to the socio-cultural and family system as well as issues related to educational policy and the school system. It is also important to consider the geographical and ethnic diversity of the country when deciding to choose a methodological approach.

The author believed that mixed methodological approach would be appropriate to investigate the issue of female students' dropout. Therefore, this study will use qualitative data (interviews) and quantitative data (surveys), involving both subjective and objective positions. Morgan (2007) called this stance 'intersubjectivity'.

Although the survey questionnaire used for this research does not generate numeric data, it generates data of quantitative nature, quantitative in the sense that the data are obtained in categories such as 'yes' or 'no' and through a rating scale. The researcher is not actively involved in the process of data collection as in the qualitative data collection. Such close ended responses can be summarised using

descriptive statistics. In addition, inferential statistics can be used to find differences in opinion among groups. Two methods would hence generate different nature of data allowing a comparison to cross check the findings.

3.2.2 Nature of Research

As discussed above, the principal objective of this empirical study is to explore the phenomenon of female students' dropout with a focus on the impact of school factors such as educational policy, teaching and assessment system and curriculum on female students' dropout. It was decided that the issue would be investigated using qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

This study puts the problem of high school dropout at the centre of the process of inquiry. Therefore, relying on only one method of investigation would not ensure the validity of the findings. This study uses both kinds of data because multiple approaches will cross-validate the findings (Creswell, 2003). This cross-validation of findings comes from comparison of the findings of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys (see chapter seven).

The aim of this choice of methods is to elicit rich description and interpretation (Thorne, 2008) from different categories of interviewees, while also eliciting information capable of quantitative analysis from a larger number of participants. It utilises both 'top-down deductive and bottom-up inductive processes in the same study' to 'explore the research problem or to answer the research question through a synergistic process' (Abbas Tashakkori, 2010). For instance, this study uses a quantitative survey questionnaire to test perceptions and assumptions derived from existing literature as hypotheses regarding female education in Nepal. The questionnaire provided a series of Likert statements about barriers females face within the school system and socio-cultural context. Descriptive and non-parametric statistical tests were carried out with the use of the SPSS. Thus, these hypotheses were tested quantitatively and conclusion was drawn about them. This was a top-down deductive approach.

Likewise, this study generated a large amount of qualitative data through open-ended, in-depth interviews with 96 respondents. The aim of generating such data was to study patterns and structures of experiences that were evident in respondents' narratives. The analysis of the data resulted in a number of findings. The findings were further analysed and consolidated in three models that answered the research questions. These models were: i. educational-exclusion model ii. socio-cultural-exclusion model iii. Economic-political-exclusion model. Thus, the journey from raw interview data to formulation of explanatory models was a bottom up approach. These approaches cross-validate findings.

Creswell (2003) argues that 'all methods have limitations; researchers feel that biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods.' Halcomb and Andrew (2005) argued that the use of multiple data sources and methods cross-checked and validated findings and improved the depth and quality of the results.

3.2.3 Researcher Positionality

There are several aspects of my position as a researcher. The first is that I am a male Nepali. I had been involved in teaching in Nepal for over fifteen years before I moved to the UK for university studies. Therefore, I was familiar with the teaching environment in Nepalese schools. This experience made me realise the gravity of the problem and motivated me to embark on this study. Therefore, I acknowledge that I had access to insider's perspective because I shared understanding of socio-cultural beliefs and practices with some of the participants. At the same time, when I was collecting data, I was in Nepal as a researcher from a UK university. Therefore, my position would be best described by what Patricia Hill Collins (1998) called 'outsider within'.

This positionality of mine was a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge was that the knowledge I already had could influence the course of interviews, and the

opportunity was that it was not too difficult for me to obtain trust from the respondents and build rapport with them. Holmes (2014) discusses Herod's (1998) views about the insider-outsider debate and the effect of positionality. According to Holmes, Andrew Herod questions the epistemological assumption that an insider will necessarily produce 'truer' knowledge, arguing that research is a social process in which the interviewer and interviewee participate jointly in knowledge creation. I had to negotiate my position through the process of knowledge creation.

Ethnically, I belong to Brahmin family, which in Hindu caste hierarchy is placed in the highest position. Personally, I am opposed to such hierarchical division and try to avoid all kinds of behaviours associated with it. However, I acknowledge that this also could impact my conversation with respondents with different ethnic backgrounds, because the participants belonged to the society where such practices still existed. Elwood and Martin (2000, p. 651) suggest 'that race, class, family status, ethnicity and other social identities are important sources of differential power that shape relation between researchers and participants even if they share similar national local or identities'. My family status and social class were something the participants could not be aware of but my looks revealed my ethnicity as people with Indo-Aryan root such as Brahmin and Chhetris bear different looks from those with Tibeto-Burman root such as Tamang, Limbu and Rai. In that case, I relied more on myself being a Nepali and my ability to speak with them in Nepalese language. I also relied on Nepali culture that encouraged them to cooperate with someone who comes from afar as a guest. In Nepali culture guests are esteemed as god (Rothchild, 2012).

The next was that I was in the field as a researcher from a UK university. My role as a male researcher from foreign university could have an influence on the research process and could be problematic especially to young female participants. Such identity of a researcher and research subjects had a risk of creating a hierarchy: researcher as an authority, a privileged self and the participants the other. My intention was to eliminate such power relations and make respondents feel psychologically safe so that they could share their views without hesitation. My presence as an outsider led the participants to ask me several questions such as who

I was, why I was there and how they would benefit from my work. I explained the aim of the research in a commoner's language. This helped the participants understand why I travelled all the way from UK. My role as 'outsider within' was part of this research process throughout. I explained this to the participants and made them understand that they were being asked questions not by an 'outsider' or the 'other' but by a fellow community member who spoke their language and shared their culture.

During the course of the interviews, I could easily be affected by participants' stories, especially those of dropped out females. Some of them became emotional when they told their stories of tragic incidents in their families and dire economic family conditions. Some of them were critical of their parents and teachers. It was important to check this by listening to multiple voices and avoid any kind of bias in my interpretation. Another risk of bias could originate from my teaching background. I could have likened myself to the teachers' perspectives. However, as I listened to the students' views. They revealed the other side of reality. This helped me avoid biases.

3.2.4 Research Ethics and Ethical Permission

Research with human participants involves the risk of harming 'the participant's personal social status, privacy, personal values and beliefs, and personal relationships...' (BPS, 2010, p 13). It is necessary to follow ethical codes to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and the participants agree to share their views. Participants will be ready to cooperate fully with the researchers only when they believe that the research 'respects the rights and dignity of participants...' Research without ethical permission is the conduct of violence (BPS, 2010, p 4).

First, ethical permission was obtained for conducting the research from the University of Dundee ethical committee. The application for ethical approval with all required documents such as interview schedules, survey questionnaires, participant information sheets, and consent forms was submitted. The committee was made

aware of the cultural sensitivity and different levels of literacy among different categories of respondents. Therefore, there could be variation in the kinds of consent among participants.

Understanding and practice of research ethics varies from place to place. There is a vast difference in the standard of research ethics in the UK and Nepal. Similarly, there are differences in legal provision and in ethical sensitivity. 'Managing these differences' in different cultural contexts, 'can be challenging, and researchers are often required to make judgements in complex situations for which there are typically no simple solutions' (Durham, 2014, p 509).

In the study locations in Nepal, ethical permission was obtained from the District Education Officer (DEO) and the participating schools. Written consent was obtained from the respondents who participated in the interviews. Oral consent was obtained from the parents for their children to participate in the interview and survey, as some parents were not literate in their own language. The respondents who participated in the survey provided oral consent to participate after the researcher explained the purpose of the research and the aim of the visit. Only then was the questionnaire provided to them. The survey questionnaire had a consent part in the beginning. Therefore, all survey respondents provided consent before they continued with the questionnaire.

During the process of data gathering this research faced ethical problems. Some dropped out female students declined to participate in the study. Schools did not keep records of dropped out students - they said they did not have such records. The only way to tackle this situation was to take the participants into the researcher's confidence by explaining the objectives of the research in clear terms, the procedure and length of time the research might take, and the benefit of the research to society. In any case, the participants were informed that their participation would be voluntary and they would not be forced to participate in the study. This helped build the trust of the participants in the researcher. Many participants then helped the

researcher find dropped out students. In some cases, they also convinced dropped out students to participate in this research.

Another important aspect was to be cautious about dealing with children and female members of society. The researcher made his best efforts to convince these groups of people that they would not be put at risk of physical or psychological harm because of their participation in this study and that this research did not intend to intrude into the respondents' privacy. The respondents were told that they were free to withdraw even after the interviews and survey were over, in case they felt uncomfortable about their participation. In that case, the data collected from these participants would be destroyed immediately.

The privacy and confidentiality of data and honesty and trustworthiness were maintained throughout. The participants were informed that their views and perceptions would be respected, analysed and reported anonymously, and that the information would not be shared in such a way that their identity would be known. The researcher explained that the respondents would remain anonymous and the data would be kept safe in a password protected computer. They were also informed that consent forms and survey responses would be kept safe in a locked cabinet and when the research was over such materials would be destroyed.

3.3 Sampling of Locations and Respondents

In this study, it was decided that respondents would be selected from different groups of people related to school education. A variety of categories of respondent would have multiple voices portraying multiple realities regarding issues related to female students' school outcome. This would bring out a bigger picture of the issue with all its complexities and contradictions. Eight categories of respondents initially chosen for inclusion were: students in school, students who dropped out from school, parents of the students who dropped out, the parents of the students in

school, teachers, head teachers, staff from district education office and staff from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).

Likewise, the study locations would be from the mountainous regions, hill regions and plains. Two districts from each of these ecological zones with the highest and the lowest female dropout rates would be included. The reason for choosing three zones was that these zones represented the three distinct divisions of the country on the basis of climatic conditions and the availability of transport and other public services such as hospitals and schools. Therefore, on the basis of such facilities, life was most difficult in the mountainous region. People in the hills also faced difficulty but not as much as in the mountainous region. 'Because of its relatively flat terrain, transportation and communication facilities' were 'more developed in this region than in the other two regions of the country' (DHS Nepal, 2011, p.2). The effect of such differences was found in educational outcome and female students' retention (see chapter four, five and six).

Nepal's population is characterized by unique features of caste and ethnic roots. 'Many varieties of Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions make up a rich tapestry of difference, with numerous ethnic groups associated with particular areas and religio-cultural systems' (Sibbons, 2010, p 35). Including the diversity of geographical variations in sampling incorporated the diverse socio-cultural contexts in each geographical region.

The figure below (Figure 3.1) summarises the sampling for the present study which includes study locations and respondent categories. In terms of respondents' categories, although the initial sampling plan included staff from the Ministry of Education and Curriculum Development Centre as participants, the researcher suffered time constraint during the fieldwork. Therefore, they were not included in the research.

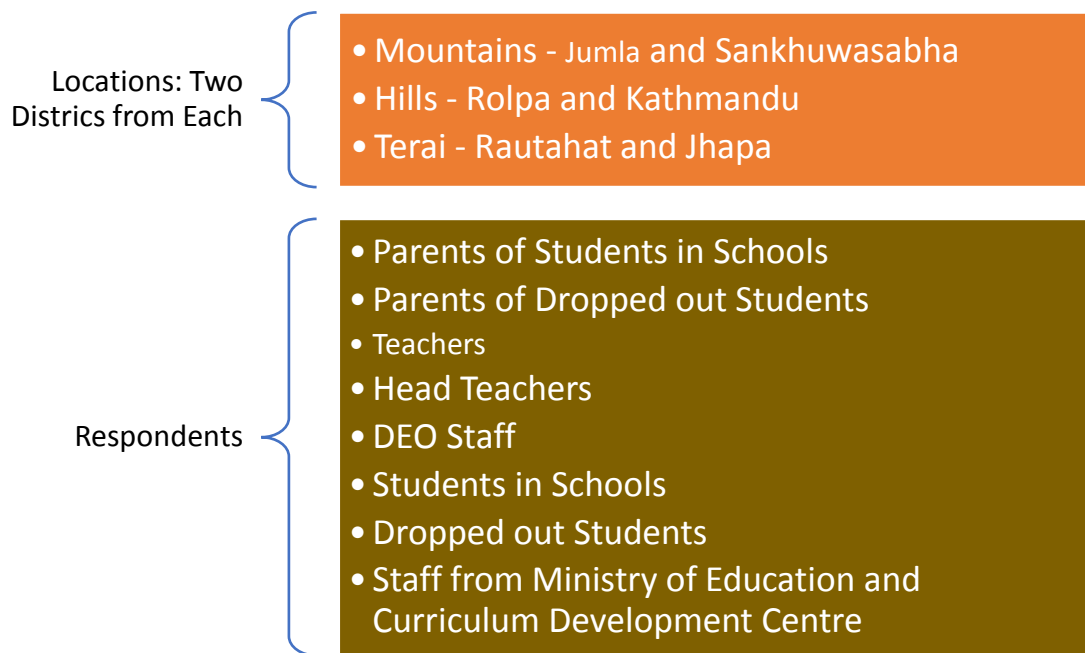


Figure 3. 1. Sample Categories

- Location: Six districts; two from each of the three ecological regions.
- Schools: Six schools; one from each district location.
- Respondents: Initially it was decided that the number of respondents for each location would be between 15 to 20 for qualitative interviews and 80 to 100 for survey. Flexibility in the number of respondents would be required because there was no certainty of accessing students who dropped out from school and their parents. Attempts were made to select an equal number of male and female respondents in each category as far as possible. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 (below) present the actual number of respondents included in both methods of data collection.

This study planned to make the procedure as systematic and explicit as possible. The challenge of sampling was to avoid bias and avoid sampling errors. The researcher was aware that it was a challenge to access all the locations immediately after the devastating earthquake of April 2015 and reach all categories of respondents. Taking into account the nature of different types of respondents which included dropped-out students, it was also a challenge to be consistent with the use of sampling methods.

This study used the Ministry of Education (MOE) consolidated report produced in 2011 to select locations. As the focus of the research was female students' dropout, the female students drop-out rate from grade six to grade ten was taken into account. The consolidated report provided dropout rates of male and female students from grades six to eight, and that of students from grades nine and ten separately. The researcher worked out the average dropout rates of students from the given rates.

The districts with the highest and the lowest female dropouts in each ecological zone – mountain, hills and Terai (plains) – were selected. During the fieldwork, one district Achham was replaced by Rolpa which was in the same ecological zone, had a similar socio-cultural context and dropout rates. During the time of field work, schools in Achham were closed for the summer and it was not possible to conduct a number of interviews and administer the survey questionnaires to a large number of students, teachers and parents. In Rolpa, schools were still running and the summer holidays had not begun yet. For that reason, Achham was replaced by Rolpa. The table 3.1 (below) presents the selected districts and their dropout rates (see appendix 3.8 for dropout rates of all 75 districts). The following data has been taken from the ministry of education consolidated report (MOE, 2011).

Table 3. 1 Selected District Locations

	Districts	Average Dropout Rates from Grade six to ten		Average dropout
		M	F	
Mountains				
Lowest	Sankhuwasabha	8.0	7.1	7.55
Highest	Jumla	13.5	17.5	15.5
Hills				
Lowest	Kathmandu	3.3	3.2	3.2
Highest	Achham	8.5	12.9	10.7
	Rolpa	9.9	11.5	10.7
Terai				
Lowest	Jhapa	4.2	3.3	3.7
Highest	Rautahat	13.5	17.9	15.7

Six schools were selected from 482 high schools in six districts (Jhapa-111, Sankhuwasabha-41, Kathmandu-162, Rautahat-81, Rolpa-55, Jumla-32). The strategy for selection of schools in each district location was on the basis of an individual school's dropout rates. The researcher believed such records would be available in district education offices, but no district office was able to provide them. Therefore, the researcher was unable to select the schools with the most cases of drop-outs. An alternative method would be simple random sampling.

The names of the high schools in each district was available in the district education offices. Each school in the district was assigned a number. Pieces of paper were used to write all the numbers. The pieces of paper carrying numbers were folded so that no one could see which piece contained which number. Then, one number was randomly drawn from the lots. The school assigned that number was selected.

In each of the locations, students for interviews were selected from grades six to ten and students for survey were selected from grades eight to ten. The reason for including students from higher grades only in the survey was that the survey questionnaire demanded a higher level of understanding and maturity to respond to it.

The table below provides an overview of the respondents who participated in qualitative interview.

Table 3. 2 Details of Category-wise Sample Size for Qualitative Interviews

Districts	Jumla	Rolpa	Rautahat	Kathmandu	Sankhuwasabha	Jhapa	TOTAL
DEO staff	2(1M,1F)	2M	2M	2 (1M 1F)	2 M	2 M	12
Teachers	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4 (2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	24
Head Teacher	1 M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1F	6

Parents of girls/boys in school	2(1M 1F)	2(1M 1F)	2(1M 1F)	2(1M 1F)	2(1M 1F)	2(1M 1F)	12
Parents of dropout girls/boys	2(1M 1F)	-	2 F	1 M	2 (1M 1F)	-	7
Students in School	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	4(2M 2F)	24
Dropout girls/ boy	1 F	2 (1M 1F)	4 F	1 F	1 F	2 F	11
TOTAL	16	15	19	15	16	15	96

For the survey, the questionnaire was provided to 570 respondents and a response was obtained from 567 respondents. The response rate was 99.5 percent. Two parents and one teacher did not return the questionnaire but all the rest provided their responses. The table below provides an overview of the respondents included in the survey.

Table 3. 3 Details of Category-wise Sample Size for Quantitative Survey

Gender		District of Survey						Total
		Rautahat	Jhapa	Kathmandu	Sankhuwa sabha	Jumla	Rolpa	
Male	Student	25	31	39	38	30	37	200
	Parents	3	4	5	2	3	2	19
	DEO Staff	5	5	5	5	5	5	30
	Teacher	4	5	0	3	4	3	19
	Total	37	45	49	48	42	47	268
Female	Student	55	49	41	42	50	43	280
	Parents	0	1	0	3	2	3	9
	Teacher	1	0	5	1	1	2	10
	Total	56	50	46	46	53	48	299

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The design of the research instruments was based on three different sources. The first was the literature review (see chapter two). The detailed systematic review carried out in the initial phase of the present study provided a concrete foundation

for developing interview topics and survey questionnaire. From previous studies based within and outside Nepal, the researcher became aware of the issues and complexities surrounding the research topic. The interview questions used by previous studies were already tested questions. Such questions were carefully examined to see if they were relevant to the research questions of this study. The second resource was the thesis research questions and sub-questions themselves. The research questions were key resources in developing interview topics and the survey questionnaire. The third resource was the statistics and literature about the educational situation that the government of Nepal published through the education department.

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews could provide information on how Nepalese female identity had been constructed socially and educationally. Although the question about identity was not asked, their description of their roles at home and in the society, and how they were perceived in the Nepalese socio-cultural context helped the researcher know the reality. Interviews could be crucial in constructing reality from the perspective of a representative sample of the population. The one-on-one interview schedule was framed in such a way as to elicit the information required to answer the research question.

Interviews for all categories of respondents had questions that focused on eliciting answers to the research questions. However, there was a slight variation in the questions for different categories of respondents. For instance, the questions for teachers and head teachers asked about school characteristics such as male and female teachers and the geographical area that the school covered. Such questions were not asked to parents, students and DEO staff.

Similarly, there were certain specific questions asked only to students and not to other respondents. Parents of students who dropped out had questions about reasons for leaving their studies and if teachers and head teachers showed any concern. The interview schedules basically included five parts: background, perception about girls' schooling and dropout, positive and negative factors

regarding girls' schooling, educational policy factors and ideas about intervention. On average each schedule had 30 questions and the interviews were expected to last for half an hour (See appendices 3.1 to 3.6 for full interview schedules).

The questionnaire was developed based on the topics chosen for the qualitative interviews. The questionnaires used by previous studies were also studied and relevant questions from them were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained five sections that included 40 questions. The respondents were expected to complete the questionnaire in 20 to 30 minutes (See appendix 3.7 for full questionnaire).

3.4.1 Piloting the Instruments

The first step of data gathering was to carry out piloting of the tools developed for students, parents and teachers as soon as the researcher reached Kathmandu. The researcher went to the district education office and obtained consent from the district education officer for selecting a pilot school.

The data gathering tools were trialled in a school near the district headquarters. The duration of the interviews was not longer than 20-30 minutes in most of the cases as planned. But some interviews with members of the teaching staff exceeded this time as they were very voluble on each of the topics. Some questions for the interview needed to be removed as they repeated the same idea. For example, there was a question about the respondents' perception of dropout in the set of questions for students. It asked the reasons for dropping out. It was followed by another question asking about the barriers that female students had in their way. Both of these questions basically asked same thing. They were combined in the final version after piloting.

In the survey questionnaire, the language needed to be simplified in some questions because the original version of the questionnaire required a high level of literacy and comprehension. For example, most of the students and parent respondents found

this statement difficult to understand: 'Girls from certain religions and castes are more at risk of dropping out than the girls from other religions and castes'. This statement was provided for the respondents to choose if they 'agreed' or 'disagreed'. The statement was rephrased as 'Religious background and caste has an effect on girl students' school dropout'.

The respondents had trouble with some questions where they were instructed to answer certain questions only. For example, the question instructed: if you are a parent/guardian go to question 212 and 213. Although only parents were meant to answer questions 212 and 213, students were found to be confused and ticked answers to these questions also. So, after piloting the tools, the researcher deleted these questions while administering questionnaires to students. While giving out the questionnaires to parents, the questions that were meant for other categories of respondents were crossed out.

3.4.2 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Cohen et al. (2007) argued that a study's credibility is judged by its methodological soundness. The key to that soundness is the research instrument's validity and reliability. Zohrabi (2013) states that 'validity is concerned with whether our research is believable and true and whether it is evaluating what it is supposed or purports to evaluate'(p.258). Such 'truthfulness' and probability of achieving what the study purports to achieve depends on the strength and effectiveness of the research instruments. 'Reliability refers to the degree to which the results obtained by a measurement and procedure can be replicated' (Bolarinwa, 2015, p.195). Another point about reliability is that consistency in the use of design can enhance reliability. This research seeks to compare responses among different locations and various groups of respondents in order to enhance the truthfulness and replicability of the findings.

3.4.2a Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire

The questionnaire sought to measure views and perception of respondents in a more objective way. The limitation of the questionnaire is that the researcher does not have a chance of probing into the response asking further questions and that the researcher cannot be sure if the respondents were honest in choosing their answers. Another limitation about the questionnaire is that the respondents may not have understood all the questions and may not have thought through the questions before choosing the answer. During data collection, the researcher asked respondents to read the questions carefully and allowed them a chance to ask if they did not understand any of the questions. The issue of honesty regarding the choice of their answer was a most difficult to grapple with. The researcher made an earnest request to all respondents to be honest while answering the questions and their answer would do no harm to them at all.

In addition to that, the following steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire:

- The topics about female students' school engagement were identified from previous literature when the systematic literature review was carried out.
- Elements of already tested questionnaires of previous studies that also focused on student dropout, such as Mohanraj (2010), Budiman (2015) were adopted to the questionnaire of this study. However, the question is of availability of evidence of these studies being fully reliable. This study acknowledges such limitation.
- The study supervisors reviewed the survey questionnaire 'for readability, clarity and comprehensiveness' and arrived at a 'level of agreement' (Bolarinwa, 2015, p. 197) as to which contents should be included in the final version of these instruments. Furthermore, the University of Dundee ethical approval committee also reviewed the research instruments and provided their feedback. The feedback was incorporated in the questionnaire.
- The questionnaire was also shown to another academic from Nepal. He checked the contents and provided his feedback. His feedback was incorporated.

- The respondents were told that the information they provided would be confidential and the anonymity of the information would be maintained in order to gain trust and elicit an honest and correct information. Honest and correct information could enhance the validity of the questionnaire.
- Piloting of the questionnaire was conducted, before the actual survey, in a school in Kathmandu. This gave an opportunity to avoid the chance of misunderstanding the questions by simplifying those that the respondents found difficult. This increased the instrument's reliability.

3.4.2b Validity and Reliability of Qualitative Instrument

There are views and debates surrounding the idea of reliability and validity of qualitative research (Kuzmanić, 2009). Some researchers believe that the issue of validity and reliability are positivist criteria, and not applicable to qualitative research (Wolcott, 1990). But other researchers such as Kvale (1996) believe in 'social construction of validity' in interviews (Kuzmanić, 2009, p.42). According to him 'valid qualitative research is about credibly representing different social worlds or different interpretations to the readers' (*Ibid.*, p.43). This research supports the latter view.

The focus was on the following issues to enhance the validity and reliability of the interviews:

- Piloting of interviews was carried out on a select group of respondents in a school in Kathmandu in order to find how the respondents reacted to the issues about which the questions were asked. This helped the researcher to know that the questions did not offend or frustrate the respondents and to improve the questions.
- The researcher took every effort to avoid the influence of the researcher on the respondents. The researcher wore casual clothes so that the student respondents did not take the researcher as their teacher. This helped minimise any feeling of apprehension.

- Consistency in the way the questions were put to the respondents was maintained. Familiar words were used while asking questions.
- The researcher asked politely again if any issues were unclear or if any issue they raised was new and unexpected.

3.5 Procedure

The following sections describe the procedure of data collection. The procedure for conducting interviews differed from the procedures for the survey. The interviews were conducted with people of any level of literacy because face-to-face interview only required the respondent to speak in their own language as the questions were asked in Nepali language and to have basic verbal and listening skills. The survey required reading skills and comprehension although questions were tested in a pilot phase and language was simplified. The respondents required to read and carefully chose an appropriate response. For that reason, the survey questionnaire demanded people with certain level of literacy. The researcher's intention was to avoid filtering respondents. However, flexibility was required in terms of sampling respondents to avoid the risk of selecting respondents but getting no response, especially in rural locations such as Rautahat, Jumla, Rolpa and Sankhuwasabha. The researcher had to accomplish the survey negotiating such issues. Therefore, respondent sampling for the survey involved both random and purposive method. Purposive sampling was required for the parents.

This research had to grapple with a complexity regarding the timing for two methods of data collection. It was not suitable to follow a sequential data gathering approach as it required a considerable length of time. The desired method for this research would be to conduct interviews first. Then survey should have been used to probe the issues further informed by the interviews. But because of the constraint posed by country's post-disaster situation and a narrow time-frame, it was difficult to utilise this approach. Therefore, data collection did not follow a particular order but conducted concurrently. Some respondents were in both parts of the data collection. However, mostly, separate groups of respondents participated in qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Only 25 out of 96 interview

respondents were repeated in the survey that had 567 respondents. This suggests 71 respondents participated only in the interviews and 542 respondents participated only in the surveys.

It was difficult to travel to six districts located in distant regions and complete the task of collecting data within a time frame of just over a month. Somebody was required to assist in the process of data collection. So, a research assistant was recruited. It would be ideal to have a female assistant to interview female respondents, especially dropped out females, who could feel comfortable to participate freely in the interaction. However, practically it was difficult to find a female research assistant as it involved travelling to different locations.

The research assistant was a university graduate who had a professional background of field work and data collection. The researcher clearly stated and explained the research assistant's role and ethical standard and importance of confidentiality. All interviews were conducted personally by the researcher in order to maintain consistency in the interview process. The research assistant assisted in random sampling of schools, participants, finding dropped out students and their parents and in distributing survey questionnaires and collecting them back from the respondents. We cross-checked each other's way of picking up the numbers during random sampling and selecting the respondents purposively in order to mitigate any kind of bias during sampling.

3.5.1 Interviews

In Jumla, a district in the Himalayan region of western Nepal, after selecting the school from the records in the district education office, the researcher went to the school which stood on a tiny hill across a stream. It was surrounded by a village where most of the parents were *dalits*. The researcher sought to find the records of retention rate and students who had dropped out from school. No such records were available in the school. The head teacher provided the researcher with the students' attendance register from which students for interview and survey were selected by

drawing lots. The same number of male and female students were interviewed as the selection of male and female respondents was done separately.

Most of the students' and teachers' interviews took place in a room where there were books and some computer units. But some students preferred to be interviewed at home. So, the researcher visited their homes and conducted interviews there in a quiet place. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent from the participants.

It was not easy to meet parents for interviews and survey. The researcher obtained the records of the parents and their addresses. Most of the selected parents did not have a telephone. So, the researcher needed to go to their houses to find them. Initially, the researcher went looking for the parents around lunch time, but none were found at home. The researcher asked pedestrians when was a suitable time to find the villagers. They explained that the right time to find the villagers would be either early morning or evening. The ideal time they suggested would be mornings, as most of the parents from the *dalit* community would visit the *bhatti* (a local liquor shop) in the evenings. They would probably speak then but much under the influence of alcohol. So, we visited them in the morning.

It was even more difficult to find dropped-out female students. The schools did not have a reliable record of dropped-out students and could not inform the researcher where such students might have been. So, the researcher began asking everybody. Some students in school provided information about dropped-out girls, as did some parents and some teachers. So, a purposive and snowballing method was used to find dropped-out students and their parents. The researcher went from house to house to locate the dropped-out students, and obtain their consent for interviews.

In six districts altogether 11 dropped-out students were interviewed. The researcher could not get consent from all dropped out students identified. In Rolpa, a hill district in western Nepal, four dropped-out females declined to participate. Although the researcher explained the purpose of the study and said their participation would help

understand the issue which would benefit girls like themselves, they could not overcome their suspicion.

The interviews with teachers and head teachers were carried out in schools. Similarly, members of staff from the District Education Offices (DEO's) were also selected randomly and their interviews were conducted within the office premises. It was not easy to get appointments with the DEO staff for interviews. In almost all district offices, the staff were too busy. Rolpa DE office was the busiest one. Teachers and head teachers from different parts of the district were crowded there as it was the time of allocating and distributing the quarterly budget. Fortunately, the office head was a cooperative person who helped the researcher with the staff list and the records of the high schools in the district.

The researcher also met difficulty in conducting data collection in the school in Rolpa. The selected school was three hours walk from the district headquarters. The school had half yearly examinations and all the teachers and head teacher were busy conducting examinations. The head teacher did not show any interest in the study when the researcher explained about it. He kept himself busy with the usual work. Later when that day's examinations were over, he settled in his chair. The researcher approached him again, briefed him on the purpose of the research and requested his cooperation. Only after that did he provide the school records.

Kathmandu district education office was another location where the researcher faced difficulty in gathering information and conducting interviews. The staff there showed reluctance to participate, although the office had a large number of staff. The district education officer was not in the office. He was away to attend a programme. The researcher had to visit the office repeatedly over the next few days to complete the interviews and selection of schools.

The researcher experienced an extraordinary level of cooperation from everyone in Sankhuwasabha, a Himalayan district with the lowest dropout rates in the region.

The largest number of dropped-out students were interviewed in Rautahat, a district with the highest number of dropouts in the region.

3.5.2 Survey

In each school, the students' attendance register was obtained and the student participants were selected randomly. Students were assigned numbers and numbers were drawn randomly from a pool. The schools were operating and teachers cooperated in finding the students. The selected students for the survey were gathered in a classroom. The questionnaires were distributed to the students.

The students had the purpose of the research explained to them. The researcher read the participant information sheet loudly and clearly to them. The students were given a choice not to take part in the study if they did not feel comfortable and to withdraw their participation at any time in the course of doing the questionnaire. The researcher also allowed the selected students some time to read the questionnaire and ask the researcher if they did not understand anything. The students were also given the parental consent form but the parents provided only oral consent for their children to participate in the survey. The completed questionnaires were collected the next day. All 480 students (80 from each school) returned the questionnaires.

Teachers were selected using a simple random sampling method from the school attendance register and were given the participant information sheet. The method used for random sampling was same across categories. The questionnaires were given out. Some teachers returned their response the same day, some teachers returned them the next day.

The DEO staff were selected using a simple random sampling method. The questionnaires were provided to the selected staff. Not all who were selected agreed to participate. Some staff said they were too busy and were not interested. For instance, in Jhapa, one female member of staff who was a school supervisor did not agree to participate and the researcher had to select another member of staff.

Similarly, in the Kathmandu education office, two male and one female member of staff who were selected for the survey did not agree to participate and the researcher had to select other staff. There was no such denial in other district offices. Almost all DEO staff completed the questionnaire when they were in their offices and returned them the same day.

The most challenging part of the survey was to get the parents to participate. The parents were selected from school records but the researcher had to go to their houses looking for them. In case we did not find the parent we selected, or in case the parent we selected did not want to participate, we required to find another parent purposively. The parents with good educational background had no problem in completing the questionnaire. However, for parents who had a low literacy level, it was a real challenge. The researcher needed to explain every question before the questionnaire was left with them to complete. There was a risk of researcher bias if the questionnaire was done in front of the researcher. So, to avoid this, the researcher left the questionnaire to complete on their own and collected it on the day the parents advised the researcher to return to collect it.

3.6 Analysis

Data analysis began with transcribing of the audio-recording of the interviews and translating from Nepali to English. The following section describe the process in detail.

3.6.1 Transcribing Interviews and Inter-rater Reliability

The interviews were conducted in native Nepali and audio-recorded on a portable recording device. After the field work the audio files were saved in the researcher's password protected personal computer and the files in the audio recorder were deleted. No one other than the researcher could access the computer used for saving the audio-files.

The initial task after the field work was to listen to the recordings of the individual participant's interviews and start translating and transcribing them. The task of transcribing and translating 96 interviews was time consuming. The researcher listened to the interviews carefully and translated and transcribed them into English. Only one listening was not enough, so the researcher had to play the recordings repeatedly, pause and listen again. At the end of transcribing, all the interviews were available for the beginning of analysis.

The issue of transcribing the interviews in Nepali and translating them into English posed an ethical dilemma. Ethically it would have been desirable to send the transcripts to some of the respondents to check the reliability. However, practically this would involve enormous amount of problems. Many of them might not be interested in reading and responding to the researcher. Another issue was that the respondents could have forgotten what they said at the time of the interviews. They could deny the entire contents and the researcher could end up conducting another interview. The other problem was that it would be a time consuming and laborious process.

The issue of the translation's reliability was addressed by an inter-rater reliability test. Audio recordings of two interviews were provided to a person whose native tongue was Nepali and who could translate in English. The person also had research experience. The anonymity of the respondent was maintained. The researcher's version of the transcripts was compared with the ones done by the second transcriber. The contents were checked by the researcher and both the supervisors. It was found that both versions of transcripts had essentially the same contents. The only difference was in the use of language (see appendix 3.12 for both versions of transcripts).

3.6.2 Qualitative Interviews

The transcribing of 96 audio recording involved active listening for a considerable period of time. This gave the researcher an idea of the broad topics the respondents spoke about. It was also a time when note-taking of prominent issues began.

Because of the size of the interview data, it was thought that a computer assisted analytical tool such as NVivo could ease the process of creating themes, subthemes and moving ahead with a systematic analysis (Jones, 2007). Therefore, data analysis software NVivo 10 was used for the analysis (Johnston, 2006). All interview transcripts were uploaded into the software. Initially two broad areas – school system factors and socio-cultural factors – were identified and two folders were created in the NVivo. Then, the interview transcripts were read and re-read. The issues the respondents raised were highlighted and noted. Some notes were taken prior to this while listening to the audio recordings. Thus, a number of themes which NVivo called ‘nodes’ in each folder were created. There were 17 topics (nodes) in the school system and 15 on socio-cultural issues. These topics were identified from the interview transcripts, on the basis of respondents’ focus of discussion and their repetition.

The researcher went through each individual transcript putting the data into the relevant node. After it was completed, the researcher was able to see which node or theme had how much data. It was easy in NVivo to see the number of people who discussed a particular issue. The strongest themes emerged as NVivo ranked the themes in order with the highest number of references on top and the one with the least number of references at the bottom.

Thus, comparison of the views of different categories of respondent was possible. It was now easy to find the differences and similarities in opinion between adult and child participants, male and female participants and between the participants of different regions. The advantage of using NVivo software was that the researcher could place all the positive comments under one node and negative comments in

another, open both nodes at the same time and read them together so that it was easy to make comparison.

The data gathered under different topics relating to the school system showed that the effect of the examination and evaluation system had the highest number of references and the effect of the poor implementation of educational policy had the second highest. The lack of reward and punishment had the least number of references. Similarly, data on the socio-cultural side showed that the effect of the family's economic status had the highest number of references, the effect of parental awareness had the second highest and the effect of conflict between parents had the least number of references (see chapter four for details). Thus, the most important and the least important topics were identified.

3.6.3 Quantitative Survey

Over five hundred responses were collected from six districts. Before transferring responses from paper questionnaire to SPSS spreadsheet, the responses needed to be coded. Each possible answer was assigned a code (a number). For example, in the question of 'gender' male was assigned '1' and female '2'. All the responses were coded in the same way. The neutral answers 'don't know' were not assigned any numerical code because it would be confusing at the time of running the tests. Then for each question the responses were manually entered into the SPSS spreadsheet. SPSS version 23 (Field, 2009) was used for the analysis.

The researcher checked the data for normality in order to make a decision whether to apply parametric tests or non-parametric tests. The data were not found to be distributed normally for any category of respondent. Therefore, it was decided that non-parametric tests would be used for the analysis. A data analysis strategy was prepared. It was decided that the personal demographic section would be analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency table and bar diagrams.

The decision on the analytical method for Likert type questions was problematic as some researchers treated the response levels as ratio or interval scale and used parametric tests. Sullivan and Artino (2013) refer to Dr. Geoff Norman, one of the world's leaders in medical education research methodology, who believes that parametric tests can be used to analyse a Likert type response because 'parametric tests are generally more robust than non-parametric tests. That is, parametric tests tend to give "the right answer" even when statistical assumptions—such as normal distribution of data—are violated, even to an extreme degree' (*Ibid.*).

However, other researchers treat ordinal data such as Likert scales only as ordinal data and use non-parametric tests. Those who treat them as interval or ratio scale data consider that the difference between the two response levels is equal. But those who treat such responses as ordinal argue that the difference between 'often' and 'never' or the difference between 'strongly agree' and 'agree' is not measurable.

Therefore, the researcher believed that to treat response levels in Likert type questions as interval or ratio scale data involved controversy. For this study it was decided that the Likert scale responses would be treated as ordinal data. Initially, a frequency count would be taken. Then a non-parametric statistical test would be applied if the frequency table showed a significant variation in responses. The Kruskal Wallis test would be applied to see if there was a significant difference among different groups of respondents. The Mann-Whitney test would be used to see if any two groups differed significantly (Siegel, 1956).

3.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research questions, the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, research design, sampling, research instruments, ethical dilemmas and ethical permissions, procedures in field work and collection of data, and data management and data analysis procedures. In addition, this chapter also outlined the challenges the researcher faced during the fieldwork.

In conclusion this chapter captures the explicit stages of research that this study utilised.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SYSTEM AND FEMALE DROPOUT

4.1 Introduction

The district locations in which the data collection occurred were selected systematically on the basis of dropout rates available in the 2011 report of Ministry of Education. Sampling of schools was affected by the lack of records of dropout trends within the districts and lack of records of dropped out students in schools. This had an impact on the objective of finding a most affected school in the district. However, it was found that the problem of dropout occurred in all locations. Therefore, the impact of the paucity of such data was limited on finding respondents. Similar conclusion was drawn regarding lack of records of dropped out students in schools and the use of purposive and snowballing sampling (see 3.3). The process of selection of respondents would have been more systematic and less tedious if such records were available. However, all the respondents selected through different sampling procedures showed familiarity about the issue of dropout. Therefore, the informants were capable to contribute remarkably to the research problem. Hence, the lack of such records also had limited impact on the process and on the results.

This chapter reports on the findings about educational policy and school system drawn from the participants' experiences and perspectives. The findings will also incorporate the dynamics of differences in the views between male and female, adults and children, policy makers and other participants. The views have been organised and presented thematically.

When asked about school system and educational policy, the district education office staff and the teachers offered ample critiques and comments. Parents and students could comment on school system but were less aware of the educational policy. Here is an overview of the topics about school system and education policy and the number of references each topic had from the participants.

The table below lists the issues that emerged from interviews and are in an order with the ones discussed by the largest number of participants on top of the list and ones discussed by the smallest number of respondents at the bottom. It is evident that gender issues constantly interact with school environment, educational policy, curriculum, assessment system and politics. The respondents extensively discussed the system of evaluation that the policy introduced to replace the summative assessment system (Torres and Quaresma, 2017). According to them the new system continued the practice of gender discrimination and exclusion because of poor infrastructure and implementation. The findings of this study indicate that more and more future studies need to focus on implementation of student evaluation, school infrastructure issues, safety and support system in schools. A detailed discussion on each issue follows the table.

Table 4. 1 School System and Education Policy

SN	Nodes	No of Interview Sources	No of references
1	Examinations and evaluation system	49	61
2	Implementation of policy and monitoring	32	55
3	Poor safety at school or unhelpful school environment	33	41
4	Motivation in students	31	37
5	Inadequate amenities at school	22	27
6	Quality of teaching	18	24
7	Student teacher ratio	17	19
8	Parents and school communication	14	16
9	Distance between home and school	15	15
10	Additional support to low performers	11	14
11	Corporal punishment	12	13
12	Motivation in teachers	12	12
13	Inadequate scholarship quotas and amount	10	10
14	Political encroachment in schools	9	10
15	Teaching vocational skills at schools	7	7
16	Impractical elements in curriculum	6	7
17	Reward and punishment system	3	3

4.2 Effect of Examinations and Evaluation System

Discussion about examination system introduces contradiction in interview discourse (Berg, 2005) as seven respondents denied the claim that exam system influenced female dropout.

All the participants accepted that socio-political and educational situations had seen positive changes in recent years. But their responses revealed that problems persisted at various levels that had a significant impact on school dropout.

The respondents revealed that the schools in Nepal currently utilise two methods of examination system. The lower grades have Continuous Assessment System (CAS). The policy aims to apply this system up to higher grades in the future. However, until now grades 8, 9, 10 have traditional written examination system in which those who fail the end-of-the year final examinations require to repeat the same grade. According to respondents, this kind of mixed evaluation system have created a lot of problems and have an impact on female students' dropout.

Examining the interviewees' responses regarding the effect of the examination or evaluation system on school dropout, it was found that 49 (21 Male, 28 Female) respondents made 61 comments on the topic. Out of them 42 respondents claimed that the examination system had a significant effect on female students' dropout. Seven respondents, all of them teachers, denied that the examination or evaluation system had any effect on school dropout.

'Not many students leave school because of failing the grade exams. I don't think exam causes dropout. Students go to other schools but do not dropout.'

-Male Teacher

Eleven students (ten females and one male) who dropped out from school were interviewed, of whom five reported that they left school because of their poor study

performance and failure in examinations. They believed that the examination system had a strong effect on school retention.

4.2.1 Effect of Examination Related Socio-psychological Pressure

Parents' have undue expectation on their children creating a strain in them. Parents want their children to excel academically (Yee, 2010) without being aware of children's learning habit and capability, and the level of support they have at home and schools.

Child respondents and female teachers voiced concern over socio-psychological pressure of examinations and their effect on school leavers.

Seven respondents raised issues such as parents' apathy after their daughters fail the grade promotion examinations. Out of them, four were teachers and three were students. Fourteen respondents, four males and ten females, believed the factors related to the evaluation system such as feelings of embarrassment in girls because of being over age for the grade, the level of motivation after their constant low performance, people's attitude toward those who failed the examinations and most importantly the psychological pressure the females had to undergo were responsible for female students' dropout.

"As a female, I see several barriers for females. There are issues of social pressure, pressure within the family. I think you must have read the news of four girls killing themselves jumping into the river after they failed the school examinations in western Nepal. Why should they do that? There must be a brutal psychological pressure, an issue of prestige or a pressure within the family."

- Female Teacher

'Some feel too bad because of social reasons as well. People pass negative comments; some parents shout at them for failing the examinations. This will

have severe consequences such as leaving the school. Some students take extreme steps such as committing suicide.'

-Female Student in School (10th grade)

4.2.2 Children's Views: Parents, Policy Leaders and Teachers Ignore their Difficulty

Difference in perspectives between children and adult participants revealed a gap in a way these two groups of participants constructed reality. Children felt that adults did not have attention to their problems. Children's view revealed a gap between parents and children's worlds, which was counterproductive in terms of children's educational engagement. In addition, lack of support system or counselling that could help students deal with examination pressure caused frustration in children resulting in quitting their studies.

One of the female students who dropped out from school said that the school teachers and the DEO staff made a mistake in publishing results. First her name was published among successful students and later it was corrected and she was put among failures which had a detrimental effect on her causing her to dropout. The DEO staff and teachers did not think what would happen to her.

Three female students spoke about the nervousness and pressure they felt about examinations. According to them neither their parents nor school teachers understood their difficulty. Nobody helped them deal with examination pressures.

4.2.3 Positive and Negative Views on Effect of Continuous Assessment System (CAS)

The system of pedagogy and student evaluation in Nepal was traditional until recently. In such method of teaching the teacher was active controller, who transmitted his/her knowledge. Students remained passive receivers of knowledge (Bhandari, 2017). Evaluation method was based on the transmission model of pedagogy. Formal tests were held to determine whether a student passed or failed. Bhandari (2017), in his discussion of Foucault (1977) and Freire (1996), argues that

formal tests are conducted to make teacher's knowledge valid and authentic. Such tests oppress all students including students from marginalised groups of people and girls.

Continuous Assessment System (CAS) was introduced in Nepalese schools in 1990 (Browne, 2016) to complement the Liberal Promotions Policy (LPP), which aimed at reducing drop out and repetition (Acharya & Shiohata, 2014). The notion of new system of teaching and evaluation were introduced in Nepal with educational reform programmes that were launched in line with achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals (*Ibid.*).

'Continuous Assessment System should be adopted in a phased manner with no holdbacks in basic education' (MOE M. o., 2009, p. 82).

The teachers and DEO staff were asked about the CAS and its effectiveness in schools. The responses were both positive and negative. Fifteen respondents spoke about CAS and its impact on school retention of which seven were positive and three were negative and five neutral. Seven of them said the CAS reduced students' dropout, three of them said it increased the chance of dropout. The positive views mentioned that because the evaluation was based on classroom activities, there were no failures and grade repetition. That was why students did not leave their studies.

The respondents who spoke about the negative results of CAS said the students were promoted to the higher grade on the basis of a certain amount of attendance. The low performers also got promoted and as they reached grade nine or ten, they could not get through examinations and frustration built up causing them to drop out.

'The policy has brought changes in assessment systems. That is good. But it should also focus on learning outcome. If a student is promoted to a new grade, without the required level of learning achievement, that creates a problem. The student may get frustrated once he/she gets to the higher grades. That may be the cause of dropout.'

-Head Teacher (Female)

Another reason is that of liberal promotion system. The policy guidance is that students should be promoted to new grade if their attendance is 75% or more during that academic year. The low performers begin to suffer as they cannot cope with the standard of the higher grade's curriculum. They find it difficult to understand and do not want to go to school. They drop out.

-Female Teacher

Five respondents' views were neutral with regard to the effect of CAS on dropout. They pointed to the complexities and challenges of putting the policy into practice. In their views the main challenge was class size. The classes in many schools were too large to follow up individual students' progress. The method of teaching in such large classes was teacher-centred lectures. The continuous assessment of students on individual basis was not possible.

'So far as the policy of CAS goes, it doesn't match with the number of students. The policy has practical problems. A class has 60 students and the teacher needs to follow individual students' progress and behavioural changes. So, to make CAS effective, teacher student ratio should be maintained.'

-Male Teacher

These responses reveal 'a clear disjunction between the policy vision for CAS and the realities which constrain its implementation at the school level' and provides a direction for future programme.

4.3 Effect of Lack of Motivation in Students

Out of ninety-six participants, 37 (26 adult and 11 children) repeatedly mentioned lack of motivation in students as a key factor responsible for dropout. According to them a low level or absence of motivation was one strong reason for student apathy

towards studies. The participants gave various explanations about how the students came to have low motivation.

4.3a Poor Study Performance as a Sources of Low/no Motivation

Fourteen (three children and 11 adults) participants viewed that the root of low/absence of motivation lay in their study performance. They did not have a low level of motivation when they started their studies but when they progressed, they found some of the subjects difficult and they did not receive enough support. According to them, the students who constantly lagged behind in challenging subjects such as maths, English and science began to lose interest in studies and became demotivated.

‘The main reason of my dropout was study performance. I had a friend who left a year after I did, she left because of her study performance as well. I did not have interest after I could not improve my studies. Because I felt hesitation asking teachers about what I found difficult, I never could catch up with the lessons and the rest of my friends.’

- Girl who dropped out

Two more children and a parent also mentioned hesitation or lack of courage in asking teachers the cause of low study performance and low motivation. Five participants, 4 students in school and 1 girl who dropped out from school, revealed that fear caused by corporal punishment is a reason for student reticence.

‘The punishment system causes hesitation. Students understand that punishment is for correction and those careless and rude students often get it. But coming to the class with stick, or asking students to stand on the bench scares other students. Girls grow more hesitant.’

-Male Student in School

4.3b Unhelpful School Environment as Source of Low/absence of Motivation

Three respondents, 2 parents and 1 female student who dropped out of school, said the school environment was not supportive to those who struggled with studies. They did not receive the amount of attention and guidance required to uplift their performance and to be motivated to continue their studies. These students said that the school administration did not provide additional support, but some individual teachers ran private tuition classes charging an amount of money. Those who could afford went to such classes, but those who could not afford, remained helpless.

'All my friends go to private coaching class for maths, I do not, because I have problem at home. Teachers do not try to understand my problem. My father doesn't bring a penny home. Mum has to manage household expenses, she works in the tea garden, on a daily wage basis. How can I then come to the private tuition? Teachers say why don't you come to the coaching class? Do you want to fail the examinations? It is Rs 5,000 for three subjects (English, Maths and Science). Sometimes we do not have even Rs 50 at home. How can I manage Rs 5000? You know, how to explain it, when the school doesn't care to listen to me? There are such problems with a number of other daughters, who need support from school, but the school doesn't come to help.'

-Female Student in School

4.3c Lack of a Prospect of Employment as Source of Low/absence of Motivation

Three respondents, all of them parents, argued that the prospect of unemployment was a major source of low motivation. They criticised that the

level of skill that students gained in school to start work was not sufficient and there were not enough jobs to accommodate them after they graduated. The students became aware when they reached higher grades.

4.3d Poor Household Environment as Source of Low/absence of Motivation

Fourteen respondents (two children, five teachers, four parents and three DEO staff) believed that lack of awareness in parents, household problems and the poor economy caused students to become distracted from studies. As this continued, the students began to engage in other things and ignored their studies.

4.3e Unspecific Reasons for Low/absence of Motivation

Three respondents, two parents and one teacher, did not specify why the students were not motivated toward studies. They said that the students did not show interest in studies and dropped out.

4.3.1 Difference of Views Between Students and Other Participants

Six students, four currently in school and two dropped out from school, argued that the school and home environment was one of the reasons girls lost interest in studies. According to them, some girls could not ask questions because they did not have enough courage to speak to teachers; they were never encouraged to speak at school and were never provided with additional support; neither teachers nor their parents came to their help; such girls never had motivation for continuing their studies and eventually dropped out.

‘The elders should try to make children understand why they should go to school. My elder sister left for no reasons. She had no interest at all. But nobody in my family or in school tried to find the reason. She was poor in studies, maybe she needed extra help?’

- Female student in school

Ten of the adult participants (eight teachers and two parents) on the other hand, claimed that the students themselves were responsible for losing motivation and dropping their studies. Their argument was that neither teachers nor the parents did anything that compelled students to quit their studies. Teachers discussed the negative effect of the liberal grade promotion system as they believed that it had been implemented without sufficient orientation to stakeholders. The following quotes illustrate such views:

'Leaving studies is the matter of children's intention. We parent do not ask them to leave their studies. But children stop themselves.'

-Parent of student in school (Male)

'The students think now teachers cannot fail them as there's no examination. They ignore studies for that reason. And they find themselves in problem when they get to higher grades.'

-Male teacher

4.4 Effect of Weakness in Implementation of Policy and Monitoring

There was an open-ended question about the effect of current education policy, its implementation and the monitoring system in relation to girl students' school retention. This initiated a good amount of discussion among respondents. Those who made considerable contribution to the topic were DEO staff, head teachers and teachers. Thirty-two respondents provided their views about current educational policy and implementation. Their views had two clear themes: i) weakness in policy, ii) weakness in implementation of policy and monitoring.

Among 32 respondents who discussed issues related to educational policy and its implementation, 16 of them pointed to the weakness in the current educational

policy, and 19 of them at the weakness in monitoring. Three respondents belonged to the group of 16 (13+3) who pointed to the weakness or strength in the educational policy and also to the group of 19 (16+3) who pointed at the weakness in implementation of the policy and weakness in monitoring in relation to the female students' dropout.

4.4.1 Weakness in Policy

Eight teachers, four head teachers and four DEO staff offered their views about the current educational policy. Two DEO staff did not see any weakness in policy and they were positive about it. To them the problem was at the level of general people's awareness and school activities.

The rest of the respondents, 14 in total, pointed at weaknesses in the educational policy. The following are the key issues they raised:

- Two DEO staff and two teachers said that there are faults in policy regarding school building structure in the hills, Himalayas and Terai. This is more of an implementation issue and has been discussed in detail in **4.3.2e**. They demanded that the policy should allow flexibility in regard to school's physical structures considering the variation in topographical and ecological conditions.
- Transfer of school management to the community was a programme launched by the World Bank in 2004 as a solution to the systemic failure in achieving goals of better student performance and sound educational planning (Carney & Bista, 2009). But the respondents were critical of the problems caused by the community-based approach of school management.
- Three head teachers argued that the policy regarding school governance through the School Management Committee (SMC) is faulty as the head teachers are not at liberty to make decisions about

improving the teaching learning environment and improving the schools' retention rate.

- Four teachers said that the policy has never been stable. It introduces one new thing and before waiting for any results, it gets changed, which hampers the teaching learning environment in schools.
- Two respondents (One head teacher and one DEO staff) claimed that there is a fault in teacher recruitment policy. The policy demands that people in the local community should get priority over other people in permanent teachers' positions. This has caused practical difficulties.

'The policy says the local people should get priority in permanent teaching positions. This has caused problems. Locals have their land, their businesses, vegetable gardens. Their attention is more toward their own matters, rather than developing professionalism. They often remain absent or come to school late. If they are from the places out with the local area, they do not have such commitments, they also hesitate to be frequently absent from school and come to school late. But the locals have affiliation with political parties, and they do not have any worry or hesitation while neglecting their duty. If they are punished, the political parties speak in their favour. The policy makers haven't given attention to this fact.'

-Head Teacher (Male)

- One head teacher argued that the policy lacked a clear guidance for a more scientific school appraisal. Until then it had been based on school leaving certificate (SLC) examinations results. But it should not be solely focused on results of the SLC examination.

4.4.2. Weakness in Implementation of Policy and Monitoring

All the 19 respondents (eight DEO staff, two head teachers and eight teachers) who made comments about current education policy accepted that there are problems in the implementation of policy which has affected the school's teaching learning environment and caused students dropout. The respondents mainly discussed the following issues:

4.4.2a Schools Suffer Shortages of Teaching Staff

'The national norms and standards include an environment for equitable participation; safe, secure and child friendly classroom; adequate instructional processes including MLE approaches and materials, and adequate number of qualified teachers.'

(MOE, 2008, p17)

Respondents' main concern was that the schools were suffering shortages of teaching staff. All 24 teachers (12 males and 12 females) and six head teachers (five males and one female) who participated in the study said that the provision of teachers was not right. According to them, there were various categories of teachers in the same school, for instance, teachers in permanent teaching positions, teachers in temporary service, teachers salaried by schools themselves (*niji shrot*) and teachers termed as *rahat* funded by a donor agency. There are teachers who wear uniforms and teachers who do not. The teachers said that this had a significant effect on the quality of teaching because the teachers trained and qualified for teaching lower grades often needed to teach in higher grades.

'In the past few years our school lost four permanent teachers' positions when the district office reviewed the teachers' positions in the district. You see, grade nine and ten have 170 and 180 students in them but we have only two sections in each. So, it is not because we

did not need teachers, we simply lost the positions. Instead we need more teachers. If we had more teachers, we could split grade nine and ten in three classes each. And obviously teachers could pay more attention to low performing students who eventually get dropped out.'

-Female Teacher

Four DEO staff (three males and one female) also raised the issue of shortage of staff in schools. The reason they provided was that the government had not created the teaching position (*darbandi*) for years. The primary schools had been upgraded to be secondary schools but there was no increase in teaching positions. So, the schools themselves managed salaries for the teachers and other expenses with the help of parents and donations from local people. This was extremely difficult. So, the school had to focus attention quite a lot on such things instead of on poor performing students. This had a clear impact on teachers' and students' motivation and on students' decisions to leave early.

4.4.2b Schools not in Proximity

Regarding the availability of schools MOE (2008) states that 'new schools are to be opened based on a comprehensive school mapping and structural integration' (p 17). Seven respondents (three DEO staff and four teachers) pointed to the weak implementation of this policy. They said that despite the policy's claim there are places in the hill and mountainous districts where students have to walk for 2/3 hours to the school and the same duration from school. This has made transition from primary to high school extremely difficult and caused dropouts.

The education policy states that there should be a school within certain area, but in many places, that's not been implemented and students walk a long distance. Once students finish the primary level of education, the high school is too far. Some students leave because of that reason.

DEO Staff (Female)

In the hills and mountainous districts Rolpa and Sankhuwasabha, six female students who were still at school revealed that they had left home and were living in rented rooms near the high school. They claimed that a number of other girls who could not afford to leave home and whose parents could not support them financially to rent apartments near high schools dropped out. Although the question was about the factors that caused the drop out of females in high schools, the respondents raised the question about females who completed primary school education but could not go to high schools and dropped out.

The same respondents also discussed the cases of female students who tried commuting to high school from their homes, but found it difficult because of the distance, and also their parents grew concerned about their safety. This caused them to drop out from school.

4.4.2c Provision of Scholarship not Effective

The interview responses regarding provision of scholarship revealed that the provision of scholarship has encouraged enrolment but it has not yet been proved to be an effective measure to improve the retention rate. Respondents voiced three major concerns over the provision of scholarships to girl students and children of ethnic minorities:

- The first was about the scholarship being spread among many in tiny amounts which was not very helpful to the students who received it. Ten respondents (four parents, three teachers, two students and one DEO staff) said that the amount of scholarship was very small.

‘There is a fault in scholarship provision and its implementation. The amount is given to girls is a bit, Rs 400, a year, which hardly contributes towards their expenses. The inflation is so high that the amount cannot be a significant help. Instead of providing that amount to 50%

of girls, if the amount is increased and given to a few who are really needy, that could do a real job.'

-DEO staff (Male)

- The second is that it should take into account whether a student is in real need of it. Seven female teachers and two male teachers said that some students from a marginalised group of parents who had a huge business and were rich received the scholarship as they belonged to the category eligible for scholarship but a high caste Brahmin child who was economically in a miserable condition was not eligible to receive scholarship.

'What I have found is a dalit who has a business worth a million is getting the scholarship whereas a Brahmin who is living in a dire condition doesn't get the scholarship because he belongs to one of the so-called high caste.'

- Female teacher

- The third was that there was a lack of any mechanism to monitor if the scholarship was working to the benefit of female students and the students who belonged to an ethnic minority. Two head teachers and two teachers had such concerns.

'But the bad thing is with the money given for buying uniform and textbooks or for other study related things, parents buy salt and oil, parents use it to pay off the debt at the grocery shop. And the risk of leaving studies remains there. So there should be someone to see if the money given out to parents is used properly.'

- Head Teacher (Male)

4.4.2d Weak Monitoring of Schools and Teachers' Accountability

'A code of conduct will be developed and enforced in schools to safeguard pro-poor, non-discriminatory, and non-punitive practices. Teachers' attitude and behaviour will be assessed, among other things, as part of their performance evaluation (MOE, 2008, p 16).

The question of policy implementation-initiated discussion about the staff situation, the monitoring of schools and teaching environment in relation to the learning environment and the likelihood of students' dropout. Five DEO staff and two head teachers focused their arguments on weak school monitoring and teachers' performance evaluation. They claimed that because of insufficient staff in the district education office, the school supervisors were in charge of so many schools that it was impossible for a supervisor to go around all those schools and to carry out follow up visits.

'The major thing to affect us is workload. I have to look after three resource centres. I have to go round about 200 schools. And we get instruction from time to time to submit a report of field visit in three days' time, or two days' time. You can imagine, how much honest I can be.'

DEO Staff (Male)

These respondents stressed the fact that timely monitoring visits and teachers' performance evaluation would make teachers accountable. The effect of it on students' study performance would improve the retention rate.

Five teachers also complained that the selection process of the resource persons (RP's) and School Supervisors is faulty. Normally those who had been teachers for over 20 years, who were retired and exhausted from teaching became RP's. They did not have any enthusiasm and could not contribute significantly to the school systems.

They did not do what they should to influence the school system so that both male and female students felt safe and interested in study. As a result, the poor performing girls became victims and quit their studies.

Effect of Region: There is also an effect of region on weak monitoring. One of the hill district education office staff (school supervisor) complained that there were only two school supervisors in the office, whereas schools in the districts were over 300. The quote below from a head teacher's interview reveals a similar situation. There were places in the district where it took one whole day to walk from one school to the other as there was no other option of transport. According to these respondents the policy implementation would be highly effective with a good number of staff in the district education office. If the monitoring were regular and strong, that would result in a positive learning environment in schools and the school retention rate would be improved.

'...For example, the school supervisors have 100 schools to supervise. The hardships because of geographical condition, because of rocky hills, they have to walk up and down as many places won't have the facility of transportation. The school teachers at such places never see and know who their school supervisor is. This means the monitoring is non-existent in those areas.'

-Head Teacher (Male)

Two DEO staff and two teachers also criticised the lack of attention on ecological variation in regard to the school building structures at the level of policy implementation. For example, the school buildings in Terai should not have tin roofs as it is extremely hot during summer and tin roofs add to the classroom temperature. But it may be in order to have tin roofs in the hills and Himalayas.

4.4.2e Mismatch Between Teaching Skills and the Demand of Policy

District education office staff and teachers pointed to the gap between the demands of educational policy and skills among teaching staff. Seven teachers and three DEO staff spoke about it. They argued that the mismatch was between the teachers teaching for years in a traditional teacher-centred lecture method and the new curriculum that demands activity based, pupil centred teaching. Browne (2016) argues that the CAS has not had the desired outcomes for these reasons:

- ‘Lack of accountability in government schools, with schools failing to delineate teachers’ responsibilities for improving teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Weak monitoring and supervision at the classroom level, along with a lack of on-the-spot technical backstopping for teachers and weak skill-based teacher training, which lack demonstration, practice and feedback and instead focus on teaching content and disseminating information.’ (Ibid., p. 15)

Teachers claimed that the method of recruitment of the school supervisors and resource persons in district education offices is faulty. According to them, those DEO positions were often filled by teachers who had been teachers for years, who were exhausted by teaching and had no willingness for novelty and change. Therefore, the teachers emphasised that this situation impaired the monitoring and overall teaching learning situation in the district. There was also the effect of this on school retention.

In the same vein the teachers spoke about the medium of instruction and available skills. The policy document SSRP says:

‘Children’s right to basic education through mother tongues will be guaranteed in at least the first three grades. The choice of medium of

instruction in school will be determined by the school management committee (SMC) in consultation with the local government’ (MOE, 2008, p81).

The teachers argued that the private English medium schools had given tough competition to the public schools in terms of enrolment in the lower grades. So, taking into account parents fascination for English and against the policy’s guideline about use of the mother tongue, in a number of districts the SMC decided to switch the medium of instruction to English in the lower grades. The teachers who had never taught in English struggled and student learning got worse.

‘They say that medium of instruction will be English in lower grades. There is no prior study of what kind of teaching staff we have, what skills are available and what is not. Are teachers trained? Do teachers have required level of English language competency? Are teachers ready?’

-Head Teacher (Male)

The respondents opined that the lack of harmony between the policy guidelines and the way school systems operated caused problems. Such problems built up with a significant impact on students’ retention.

4.5 Effect of Poor Safety Systems, Unhelpful School Environment and Inadequate School Amenities

For thirty-three respondents (four DEO staff, eight teachers, three parents and 16 students), poor safety and support systems at school were a strong reason for female students’ dropout from high schools. There were differences in views between male and female respondents, and student and teacher respondents.

Similarly, 22 respondents (three DEO staff, four students who dropped out from school, one head teacher, one parent, seven students in school and six teachers) spoke about the effect of inadequate school amenities and unequal distribution of resources on dropout.

4.5.1 Female Respondents: Safety and Support System Poor

Thirteen adult female respondents (11 teachers, two parents) argued that poor safety and support systems at school were reasons for girl students to drop their studies. As mentioned in a previous subsection, the female teachers further explained how adolescent girls suppressed their feelings at home and at school because of the socio-cultural structure and how this affected them and forced them to take a wrong decision.

‘Girls have problems, physical, emotional problems and because of our social cultural structure, they are less likely to articulate their problems. The schools should have something, a place or a centre, so that they can share their problems openly. But I’m sure there’s nothing like that in schools. So they cannot tell even if they do not understand a lesson or even if they are mistreated by somebody and so on. When the problems build up, they remain under pressure of it. They cannot think of their future. They cannot think of their career. They start looking for a way to escape. They dropout from school.’

- Female teacher from hills

They also raised issues such as toilets and space where the females could maintain their privacy and how the health and safety of the girl students was at risk at schools. The same female respondents discussed how government policy statements conflicted with the reality in schools. Seven of them said that every school should have separate toilets for girls and boys as per the policy document’s instruction, but at implementation level it was not available in all schools. There were schools that had only one toilet. The separate toilets were also not useful because nobody kept them clean. The toilets were so messy that students avoided using them. These issues bring forth the socialist feminist argument that schools function as a site for the reproduction of female's oppression (Stromquist, 1990).

4.5.1a Teachers' Views Contradicted with Students' Views

While other students did not discuss menstruation, five female students complained that when they went to female teachers to report that they had a period at school, female teachers simply sent them home. But three female teachers did not agree with this. They said they were ready to help girls at school; they even provided the girls with safety pads. But girls did not come to the teachers to ask for it. The following quotes reflect the contradiction:

'When we have a period at school, we feel sore head and menstrual pain, talk to the lady teachers. They send us home. (Don't they provide safety pads or medicine? - No they send us home.)'

-Female Student from Terai

' (smile...) Yes, I feel so. There is provision of safety pads in schools these days. We brief them saying that if any girl feels they need it during school hours, they can tell us. But until today, no girl has spoken about it, no girl has asked for the safety pad at school, isn't this strange?'

- Female teacher from hills

4.5.1b Female respondents: Incidents of Harassment

Six female students, all of them in school at the time of interview, complained that the schools' regulations were not supportive for girls in relation to incidents of harassment.

If the disciplinary system in school is not good, girls do not feel safe. The boys from outside the school come near the school area and tease the girls. Boys in school also make embarrassing comments. Such things make girls feel harassed and decide not to go to school. They have complained about this to the head teacher and teachers. The teachers call some of the boys and speak

to them. Such boys should be expelled from school. But the school does not take serious action on them.

-Female student from hills

Similarly, two female DEO staff and three female teachers also emphasised that boys behaving badly to girls was taken as normal and girls' complaints of harassment was not taken seriously. This put additional psychological pressure on girl students. But none of the male respondents spoke about mistreatment and the effect of sexual harassment on drop out.

4.5.1c Male Respondents: Female Students Do Not Share Their Problems

Male teachers, DEO staff and parents did not discuss the psychological aspect of female student difficulties in schools. They focused more on school amenities such as the library, playground, availability of clean drinking water and class sizes. When asked about menstruation, issues of privacy and safety at school, seven male teachers complained that female students did not share their problems with teachers. They counselled the students about it but the girls preferred to keep their problems to themselves.

'Well, I don't know how to put it, when they have a period at home, some of them do not come to school at all. Some of them rest their head on the desk, but do not say anything. Later we find that they have already gone home. Some girls go home quietly without even informing their class teacher. We have first aid in place in school and also inform the students about this but they simply do not use it, I'm not complaining, but I'm saying this is what happens at schools'.

- Male teacher from mountains

Three male DEO staff said that change in the behaviour of female students was occurring, they were becoming more outspoken, compared to the past. Yet, there

were problems in regard to sharing their problems with teachers at school. Reticence was a barrier to their studies and related to dropout.

4.5.2 Inadequate School Amenities: Cause of Dropouts

Three DEO staff, one head teacher and six teachers emphasised the lack of funding in schools and inequality in terms of access to resources. Some schools had their own resources, such as building structures and land to rent out, to help fund them in addition to the government budget, but some schools had to rely on government funding which was not enough to ensure that the schools had adequate amenities. According to the respondents, schools with poor resources had more dropout rates. One of the teachers described the classroom situation in the following way:

'Preschool children are sitting on chairs fit for grown up students. Classrooms are narrow, there are no fans when it is humid weather condition, the classroom environment is suffocating.'

-Female teacher from Terai

Four students who dropped out and seven of them who were in school complained that the school did not have clean drinking water, lacked an open space to play and other amenities such as library and computers. The classrooms were narrow. They went to school from difficult household circumstances and they were frustrated at school because of the lack of essential things that would help them with their studies. Two students among the students in school also complained about teachers' bad treatment towards students and their apathy to provide additional support in subjects such as mathematics.

'Teachers' bad treatment, no drinking water in school (here the school near us also has problem of drinking water). Toilets are there in schools but there's no water. How could students use toilet if there's no water?'

-Girl from Terai who dropped out from school

4.6 Effect of Lack of Motivation in Teachers, Poor Quality of Teaching and Inappropriate Teacher Student Ratio

Three closely related factors that caused female students' drop out emerged from a number of participants' responses (details of the numbers below). These factors were: lack of motivation in teachers, poor quality of teaching and inappropriate teacher student ratio. According to the participants, these factors caused a poor learning environment and lack of encouragement and support for the students who needed it most for continuing their studies.

4.6.1 Effect of Lack of Motivation in Teachers

Twelve respondents (three DEO Staff, three head teachers, one girl who dropped out from school, two parents and three teachers) argued that teachers' lack of motivation had a strong effect on student retention. They said that teachers lacked enthusiasm because of which students did not get the special attention and support they required. The majority of female students required attention and individualised support lack of which caused dropouts.

Two head teachers and one teacher discussed how teachers lacked commitment to the job and had low motivation. According to them, some teachers had political affiliations, some others had their own businesses, some did not feel satisfied with the job because they had too much workload, the salary was provided quarterly, refresher training was not regular and all teachers could not get the opportunity to attend these trainings. They emphasised that teachers with low motivation did little to improve students' confidence in their studies and help provide the support they required, causing the students to drop out.

4.6.2 Effect of Poor Quality of Teaching: Teachers Contradict Students

Fifteen respondents (two DEO staff, three girls who dropped out from school, five students in school and five teachers) claimed that poor quality of teaching in schools

had a strong effect on students' drop out and female students were badly affected by it.

Two teachers claimed that the teachers' recruitment process was faulty and that a vast number of teaching staff currently at work were poorly qualified and poorly skilled. This had affected the quality of teaching.

'But the major problem in the public school is that the teachers working there are not competent. Most of teachers are those who passed SLC in the 70's and the rest who were recruited later are also not taken through the service entry competition. They do not have quality. The major fault is in the teacher recruitment process. They held a fair competition last year. If they held such a competition while selecting teachers every time, that would help improve the situation.

Those old teachers are not interested in training and learning new things. They are busy with their own businesses or household affairs. Because of this the quality of classroom delivery is poor. Other things may come on track once we improve the classroom situation.'

-English subject teacher (male) from mountains

Three girls who dropped out from school complained that some teachers ignored their duty in school in order to compel students to attend the private tuition classes where the same teachers charged a substantial sum. All students in schools who offered their views about quality of teaching also complained that teachers did their job without real commitment or willingness to support students.

'The schools are not resourceful. The teachers want to earn extra through private tuition classes. Many children from poor family backgrounds can't afford to these classes. Such practices have an effect on students like me.'

-A girl from Terai who dropped out from school

Three teachers showed their concern when asked about such classes. They said that cases of extra paid classes were rare and some teachers ran such classes when demanded by students and parents.

'It is not that teachers have such intentions in classrooms. Such private tuition classes are rare. Only some subjects such as maths, science and English run such classes. They do it because some students and parents urge them to do so.' -A social studies teacher from hills

4.6.3 Effect of Inappropriate Teacher Student Ratio: Difference of Opinion among Teachers, Parents and Students

Thirteen respondents (One DEO Staff, one parent, one girl who dropped out from school, two head teachers, two students in school and six teachers) discussed the impact of class size on quality of teaching and student retention. All of them agreed that an inappropriate teacher student ratio affected the quality of teaching and quality of attention and care the individual students could get from teachers. According to them those who needed attention, felt neglected and helpless. This compelled them to drop out.

Two head teachers, one from a mountainous district and the other from the plains, discussed their problem of having large class sizes. One of the head teachers revealed that the largest class he had in his school was 130 students. The reason he explained for this was shortage of teaching staff and insufficient classrooms.

'Here students experience problems because of large classes. I've demanded more teaching staff positions but the district office does not provide them. They must have their own constraints. It should come from a higher level. The classrooms are not enough also.'

Students from different feeder schools come here with hopes of doing well. We find that some of them are in grade 8 or 9 but cannot deal

with the contents of that level. In a class of 130 students, how can a teacher deal with so many students? The teacher has a time constraint, one class lasts only 45 minutes, and students cannot cope with the text standard. So they drop out. '

-Head teacher from the mountains

The girl who dropped out complained that she felt neglected when she needed additional support in her studies. For her the reason of this was a large class (there were 52 students in her class). But the students in school had a different view. Both students complained that even if the class sizes were small, the teachers' attention was only on bright students. They said that those who were poor in studies did not get attention and the support they required and what mattered was not the class size but the teachers' commitment to support the students who felt ignored and who otherwise would drop out.

'All appreciation and attention from teachers goes to bright students. Whether the class size is big or small, it doesn't matter. Most teachers do that except for one or two. It's their way. Some teachers even say negative things about the students who are slow in learning. Such practices dishearten and discourage us. The girls who have difficulty at home and are discouraged at school decide to drop out. As parents are not aware of the value of education, they do not send them back.'

-Female student in school from hills.

All six teachers complained about the shortages of teaching staff which had resulted in inappropriate teacher student ratios. They emphasised that there was a strong relation between class size and student retention. They said they tried to help students as much as they could but they had limited time and they could not pay equal attention to all students in a large class.

Three teachers among them blamed parents' lack of awareness. They said that some parents did not care at all about their daughters' education. And that when their

daughters decided to drop their studies, they did nothing to send them back, and did not communicate anything to the teachers.

But the parents' voice was different. One parent who spoke about large classes argued that it was the responsibility of the teachers, school management and the government to ensure that their children got what they were entitled to.

'Once we send our children to school it is school's responsibility to take care of them. They should get proper attention and care. The teachers should teach them in such a way that children learn the lessons. But my children say that there are too many students in their class, there is too much noise, there is a problem of discipline and teachers cannot control the students in a classroom. And when a teacher is absent, they simply send them out to play. What a negligence!'

-Male parent from Terai

The problem of large class sizes, ignoring the value of female's privacy, schools not having sufficient classrooms, lacking in teaching staff and ultimately marginalising female students displays an inherent bias. Radical feminist gender theorists argue that 'women do not receive priority from the State because, having assigned women the reproductive tasks, the State will concentrate on improving first the education of men' (Stromquist, 1990, p.11)

4.7 Effect of Distance between Home and School: Effect of Region

Fifteen respondents discussed the distance between home and school as a determining factor for female students' school retention (the majority of them were from hill and mountain districts - seven were from the mountains, six were from the hills and two were from Terai). Category wise, there were five DEO staff, two girls who dropped out from school, two parents, two students in school and four teachers who spoke about the effect of distance between home and school.

Two female teachers and four female students (two of whom had dropped out from school and two of whom were in school) emphasised the issue of safety in the hills and mountains where the paths to school were long and difficult. These female respondents argued that the female students dropped out for this reason.

In rural hills schools are quite far. That also can be a reason of dropout. The girls have a problem of safety and walking one or more than one hour is a problem for them.

- Girl student in school from hills

The safety of girls is crucial especially in the himali (mountainous) and hill districts. Because of the difficulty caused by geographical condition and school being far at some places, girls find it difficult to cope with it and decide to leave schools early.

-Female teacher from mountains

Both parents spoke about the issue of their daughters' safety. One of them, the mother of a student in school, voiced a serious concern about how adolescent girls risked becoming the victim of girl traffickers on their way to and from school. She said that such incidents were frequent in various parts of the country.

I already said schools are far; some girls do not feel safe on the way. I have heard about girl selling in Mumbai kothis (brothels) in India. People with bad intentions can do anything if they find girls walking up and down a lonely road.

-Female parent of girl in school from hills

In the same way, one of the female DEO staff also discussed the threat of girl trafficking which caused parents and female students themselves to worry.

The distance between home and school is a trouble. Some girls leave schools just for security reasons because parents think that it is unsafe for girls in their teens to be walking such a long distance as they have heard the news of rape and girl-trafficking.

- Female DEO staff from mountains

All five DEO staff agreed that difficult geographical conditions in the hills and mountains was one of the reasons for female students' decision to drop out. They repeatedly mentioned the policy statement which gave direction to have a school within each area and the reality of not having one - because of which students had to walk a long way to get to school.

4.8 Effect of Corporal Punishment: Contradictory Views Among Respondents

Despite educational policy prohibiting corporal punishment, the practice of physical beating and harassment still occurred in schools. Twelve respondents (two DEO staff, two girls who dropped out from school, three teachers and five students in school) claimed that corporal punishment was also a factor responsible for students' dropout. The three teachers who discussed the punishment did not agree with the students. One of the DEO staff offered an example of dropout because of corporal punishment.

There is an example: I found a 14-year boy, who had left school, in Bagmara. I asked him why he left school. He said, 'the teacher hit me for not doing homework, and I used to be scared of the teacher whenever I saw him. So, I decided to leave school.'

-DEO staff from hills

All three teachers said the punishment had become a thing of past. They did not agree that incidents of corporal punishment existed and were a factor responsible for female or male students' drop out.

'Some parents come to us and say, their son or daughter is very naughty and they cannot discipline them. They even urge us to punish the children to make them obedient to teachers and parents. Teachers have a difficult task. If we listen to parents and hit them, then there would be rumour that teachers

punished students badly and harassed them. If we ignore parents, they say that the teachers did nothing to discipline students. In any case, we avoid corporal punishment these days although it played a major role in class management in the past.'

- Male teacher from Terai

But all five students claimed that corporal punishment was still in practice. One of the students' spoke positively about it saying that teachers did it only to those who broke school rules and with the intention to correct their behaviour. But the rest of them said that corporal punishment was not good and should not be practised.

'Teachers make some students stand up holding their ears all through the teaching time of a subject or hit with a stick on our palms. Punishment should not be given. Even words such as 'don't you know even that much?' can have a bad effect. Among peers, a student would feel badly insulted. That also can be a cause of dropping out from school. '

-Female student from mountains

Another student explained how teachers behaved in class and how it affected students. The quote below also explained why a number of students grow reticent.

'Some teachers are quite aggressive. Sometimes it seems they come to the classroom with their own tension in their head and when a student asks something they feel offended and they jump on that student. There are some students who make a noise in class. The teacher loses their temper and hit some others. That discourages students to speak openly to teachers. Some girls feel intimidated by it, so they never have courage to speak to teachers. This affects students who are poor at studies. They remain poor all the time and eventually drop out.'

-Girl who dropped out from school from hills

According to these students, corporal punishment distances students from teachers. Because of this, students cannot easily approach teachers when they need support.

'Teachers' harsh treatment while trying to maintain discipline also has negative effect. We often see this in our school from some teachers. When teachers treat students that way, students distance themselves from teachers and learning activities. That's why they lose faith in school and drop out.'

-Male student in school from Terai

4.9 Effect of Political Encroachment in Schools

Five DEO staff, three head teachers and one teacher (nine respondents in total) raised the issue of political encroachment when they were asked about the weaknesses in the school system and its effect on school dropout. They all agreed that political parties interfered with school activities by using school teachers as a vehicle to spread their political influence in society. All respondents linked political encroachment to the school system and its impact on student dropout. Political interference would be welcome if it were for leading schools to independence and for promoting fair school environment. However, these respondents revealed that that was not the case. The political parties exercised encroachment to cater to their vested interest which had caused volatility in the system and irresponsibility in teachers (Coughlan, 2015).

Three head teachers who discussed the problem claimed that the political parties intended to have influence on official positions ranging from the top bureaucratic positions to the members of the school management committees. According to the head teachers, the SMC might be helpful in some places, but in most cases the committee members created problems by not allowing head teachers to function freely, resulting in a poor school environment.

'The school management committee should be changed as per the change in every other sphere of activities. It normally has shares of political parties and the members with their loyalty to different political ideologies can conflict and

the head teacher may have problems. For that reason, the head teacher cannot work freely. The school environment is worsened and student dropout becomes normal.'

- Head teacher (male) from Terai

One of the head teachers said that the local teachers all had political affiliations and these teachers often ignored head teachers' warnings about their lack of commitment to work because the political leaders backed them and they felt protected. Teachers not being serious about their commitment to teaching meant students did not get the level of support they required. The head teacher argued that this had negative impact on student retention.

One teacher who spoke about political encroachment in schools said that political interference was also in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which damaged the school environment. He claimed that in some cases the chair of the PTA, who was chosen from parents, did not have his children in the state community school. He sent his children to private schools but still worked as the chair of the community school.

One of the DEO staff had worked as a head teacher previously for a number of years. He related his experience with the SMC members.

'The school managing committee (SMC) has been made autonomous. Nobody can control it. The members in it are political - from this political party and that. They think they are superior to everything. Because of this there's a conflict of interest. So the head teacher cannot exercise full liberty while trying to improve the educational environment in schools.'

- DEO Staff from Terai

Four DEO staff also agreed that political influence in the SMC had a negative effect on the school system and the retention rate. They said that the school system's impact was on both male and female students, but as female students were more at

risk of dropping out in their social context, the poorly managed school system was a stronger cause for females to leave schools early. Thus, the community-based approach of school management to create better school environment was damaged by political leaders' aim to influence voters through schools by gaining control over school system.

4.10 Effect of Lack of Parent School Communication: Parents Differ with Teachers

Fourteen respondents (eight parents, one DEO staff, one head teacher, one teacher, two girls who dropped out from school and one student in school) argued that communication between parents and school had a significant effect on early school leavers.

Four parents whose daughters had dropped out from school complained that the school rarely called them to discuss problems in their children's studies. One of the parents (female) among them said that her daughter failed grade eight twice and felt frustrated. She never got any additional support from the school and her father arranged a marriage for her. But the same parent did not say whether she made any initiative from her side to discuss her daughter's studies with teachers.

'School never contacted me since she left school. If they contact parents whose children leave school without finishing their studies, and if they provide advice to both parents and students, that could help many parents. '

- Parent of a girl who dropped out

Four parents whose children were in school agreed that the school did not contact parents. According to them, if a student stopped coming to school, the school did not ask their parents what problem they had. These parents also commented about parents' behaviour. They said that some parents showed initiative and went to school to discuss their children's studies, but some parents did not show any interest.

One head teacher who discussed the issue of communication did not agree that school did not contact parents.

'We call parents of those students who fail, three times, four times. Parents do not turn up. We want to give students a chance to re-sit, have a consultation with parents, but parents do not come. '

- Head teacher from mountains

Two girls who dropped out said there was a lack of communication and coordination between the school and parents when they decided to end their studies. They argued that the school teachers or the head teacher could convince those parents who were not aware of the value of education for daughters. But in their case, it did not happen so they could not go back to school.

One student who was in school narrated a story of her friend who dropped out. Her friend who dropped out could not attend regularly for genuine health related reasons. But the school did not want to inquire what was wrong with her and because of that reason she left school.

Unlike the head teacher above, one teacher who discussed the communication issue agreed that the communication between school and parents was missing, because of which the school failed to stop students from dropping out.

Co-ordination between the parents and teachers is missing here. I think this should be regular which could help parents understand what's going on in school. Parents also may be made more aware of the need for education. And on the other hand, school can understand parents' and students' problems. Because it is missing in most of the schools, students' dropout cannot be avoided.

- Male teacher from hills

4.11 Effect of Lack of Focus on Developing Vocational Skills at Schools

Seven respondents (one DEO staff, one head teacher, three teachers, one parent and one student) stated that parents and students who did not understand the value of education asked questions about skills and jobs. According to them the issue of unemployment made them think in that way and question the use of education.

All these respondents showed concern about the skills that students required when they left school. Their focus was on teaching vocational subjects at schools. Here is a student's voice:

Some students think that after we finish studies, we do not get jobs. There are so many people who have gained degrees but have no jobs. So others think, why should we study if we do not get a job after such a hard work?

- Female student from hills

The DEO staff who commented on it pointed to the weakness of education policy and the school curriculum. One head teacher said that schools did not teach enough vocational skills so that students could do something on their own after they left school. This fact had an effect on male and female students' school retention.

School education should develop some vocational skills in students so that once the students graduate from high schools, they can do something and live on their own. The current system makes students to find jobs either in the government offices or in the private sector. Because of this the unemployment rate of qualified girls and boys has gone up. It has an effect on school retention.

- Head teacher from mountains

Three teachers made a connection between the parents' intentions for their daughters and the poor possibility for finding jobs. The teachers' conclusion was that these two factors together worked against female students' school education.

In the case of girls, the parents hurry to get them married. The girls also think, what would they do with their studies when so many of their friends who gained good qualifications have got no job. This issue of unemployment also demotivates girls from completing studies.

- Male teacher from Terai

One female student said that the students in school were worried about jobs. Therefore, some students left schools without completing their studies.

4.12 Effect of Impractical Elements in Curriculum

When asked about the shortcomings in the school system and its effect on student retention, six respondents pointed to impractical elements in the curriculum, its effect on students' learning ability and dropout. Among these respondents were two DEO staff, one head teacher and three teachers.

Both DEO staff considered the activities-oriented text materials as impractical. They claimed that teachers were not trained for teaching such texts and the classroom time to carry out such activities was limited which resulted in poor quality of teaching.

The head teacher pointed to the technical difficulty of splitting weight of marks for internal evaluation (practical) and external evaluation (written examinations) among three terminal examinations. His logic was that a number of examinations took away the actual time for teaching and teachers spent more time on keeping the records of the marks for individual students than on preparing lessons, paying attention to individual students and providing additional support to low performers. The result of this was student drop out.

Three teachers pointed out that text materials in junior classes had gender bias that contributed to lowering the level of motivation among girl students. One of the teachers provided a specific example.

'The text materials show gender bias. For example: in lower grades, there are text books with reading texts: mother cooks at home and father goes out to work. Such sentences in the textbook make girl students think that their role in the future would be to look after home and children. They may begin to think that study is not important for them.'

- Female teacher from Terai

4.13 Effect of Absence of Reward and Punishment in School System

Three respondents (one DEO staff, one head teacher and one teacher) discussed the absence of reward and punishment when asked about the weakness in the school system and its effect on student retention.

All three respondents complained that there was an absence of a fair system to encourage those teachers and schools that had significant achievements in terms of academic output and retention. They believed that lack of this was also a cause of student dropout as there was nothing to encourage school completion and discourage dropout.

The teacher who raised the issue of reward and punishment said that there was a practice of rewards in some places, which was not based on a fair system but on approach and acquaintance. He also spoke about things that the policy makers should do to encourage parents. Here is what he said:

'There is not any mechanism that evaluates the teachers' performance for instance those who has been performing well and those who has not been. Those who are near the DEO and those who have a good rapport with the

leaders of a political party in power, are rewarded. Those who are working honestly but do not have important connections are never recognised. The reward also should be for parents. The parents who bring back the dropped-out kids to school, the parents who help get the dropped-out students to school, and the parents who help the students who is at risk of dropping should be rewarded. This will have a great effect on people in the community.'

-Male teacher from hills

The head teacher discussed reward and punishment providing ideas to make parents responsible. He said that this will have a positive effect on girl students' school retention rate.

'The government should cut on the facility the nation provides to those who pull their daughters and sons out of school. It should be assessed if the situation is beyond parents' control. There should be rewards for those parents whose daughters graduate from school successfully. The system of reward and punishment will make parents responsible.'

-Head teacher from mountains.

4.14 Conclusion and Summary of the Findings

The findings presented in this chapter show that the school system has a clear effect on female student drop out. Some factors such as failure in examinations, low motivation, lack of additional support in studies, home school distance, corporal punishment, lack of parent school communication, poor safety and an unhelpful school environment have a direct effect; whereas poor implementation of policy, shortage of government funding, weak monitoring, political encroachment in schools and poor prospects of employment have an indirect effect. On some issues respondents had differing views. Children's voices differed from elders'. For example, students differed from teachers when corporal punishment was discussed. Another

example was teachers linked the issue that teachers should pay individual attention to students to the issue of class size and shortages of teaching staff. Because of large class size they were not able to pay attention to poor performing students, but the student respondents argued that even if the class was small, teachers paid attention to only bright students.

All the issues discussed by the respondents in qualitative interviews were important for understanding the phenomenon of dropout in Nepal. The only difference between them were some issues were raised by a large number of respondents and some by a small number. The summary section includes all those issues. Similar issues have been placed together. The ones that appear early had more responses than those that appear later. The order of topics in the summary is based on interview responses. Summary of the findings has also included findings from the survey along with the findings from the interviews.

The analysis of interviews and survey responses revealed a number of factors that affected students' school engagement causing them to drop out. The interview respondents explained why it was more difficult for female students to continue their studies. Regarding the effect of the school system, 49 respondents said that formal examinations had a strong effect on female students' dropout. This issue had the highest number of responses regarding school system related issues. On the other hand, three respondents said that the absence of reward and punishment in school system had an effect on dropout. This was the lowest number of responses.

Major factors were:

- **Examinations, CAS (Continuous Assessment System) and socio-psychological pressure:** Interview respondents argued that examinations caused psychological pressure on students because of which there were incidents of dropout and suicide. Parents' and peers' responses to females who failed examinations caused feelings of embarrassment and humiliation.

Not implementing CAS properly had negative effects on students. Females who lagged behind in studies but were promoted to higher grades could not cope with the standard of the curriculum and decided to drop out.

- **Policy, policy implementation, monitoring:** The interview respondents raised the issue of poor implementation of CAS (see section 4.1.3). The assessment system did not match class size and the teachers did not have the proper skills for carrying it out. The policy guidance was based on the provision of a school within a certain geographical area, but this was not implemented in many remote rural areas. Because of this the distance between home and school caused difficulty for female students (section 4.3.2b).

Similarly, interview respondents said at least one female teacher should have been in each school, but this was not the case everywhere. Scholarships for female students were not needs-based. Respondents complained that Dalits got them despite being rich, but so-called high caste students did not get them even if living in economically poor conditions.

Some interview respondents also said that the policy itself had weaknesses. It remained unstable. It failed to deliver variation in school building structures according to the variation in weather conditions in different geographical locations, such as mountains, hills and plains (section 4.3.2d).

It was found from the interviews that shortage of staff in district education offices was the cause of weak monitoring. The school supervisors had too many schools to monitor. Teachers' accountability was not appraised in a timely fashion. Teachers' and district education office staff's recruitment processes were faulty.

Policy issues such as the system of formal examinations, provision of support system, appropriate curriculum and adequate funding to schools were

included in the survey, but the issues of scholarship and faults in school building structures, negative impact of CAS, poor implementation of policy were the new findings from the qualitative interviews.

- **Inadequate amenities: poor safety and unhelpful school environment:** It was found from the analysis of interviews that a range of infrastructural issues caused female students' disengagement from schools. One simple example was the lack of separate sex toilets. School staff claimed they had such facilities, but interview respondents complained that many schools still did not have them and those that had toilets lacked a water supply and proper sanitation. Schools had overcrowded classrooms, without fans or any cooling or heating system for extremely hot and cold weather conditions. Schools lacked library and independent study facilities, clean drinking water and playgrounds. It was found such a lack of resources caused feelings of discomfort and low motivation in students.
- **Insufficient government funding, insufficient scholarship quotas:** Interview respondents claimed that insufficient government funding resulted in shortages of teaching staff in schools and staff in the district education offices. Insufficient funding caused all the infrastructural issues (see above). There were scholarships for females but the number of needy students exceeded the number of scholarships available. The amount provided was also too small and did not help much
- **Quality of teaching, motivation, additional support to low performers:** Interview respondents said that both teachers and students had low motivation levels. Teachers had low motivation for reasons such as their political affiliation, having a too heavy workload and being preoccupied with activities other than that of their profession. Another reason was inappropriate student teacher ratios (exceptionally large classes), because of which the teachers struggled with managing classes. There was a lack of

additional support for low performing students because of high student numbers and not enough teachers being available. The teachers did not get timely training. Students had low motivation for reasons such as poor study performance and lack of additional support at school, poor prospects of employment and inappropriate assessment systems.

- **Corporal punishment and harassment:** The current educational policy of Nepal has forbidden corporal punishment, but during qualitative interviews student respondents revealed that students still received corporal punishment. This caused reticence in students. According to respondents, reticence was one of the major factors that caused low performing females to drop out. The practice of corporal punishment scared students.

Harassment was another issue raised by interviewees. Because of the lack of proper security system in schools, adolescent female students also experienced harassment from strangers. This discouraged girls at risk of dropout from coming to school and induced dropout. The issue of harassment was not included in the survey questionnaire.

- **Political encroachment:** Political influence on academic administration severely affected school systems. The political parties attempted to influence the recruitment of policy makers and used teachers as vehicles to spread their influence among people in the community. This had negative effects on the teaching and learning environment. This factor of encroachment in academic institutions was a new finding of the qualitative interviews.
- **Lack of practical elements in curriculum and lack of vocational subjects:** Interview respondents raised the issue of impractical elements in the curriculum. Textbooks had activities which were not practical because teachers had limited time to carry them out. The internal and external evaluations in all three terms took away time from classroom instruction.

Interview respondents also raised the issue of lack of skill- based teaching so that after graduating from school, students could undertake jobs.

- **Absence of fair system of reward and punishment:** Although only three interview respondents raised the issue of lack of fairness in reward and punishment in the school system, it was an interesting finding. A fair system of reward and punishment could motivate both teachers and students. If any teaching staff were rewarded, it was not on the basis of their hard work but on the basis of his/her political affiliation or being associated with the judging panel.
- **School-parent communication:** Both survey and interview respondents agreed that the school did not contact the parents of students who were at risk of drop out. School did not contact the parents in order to find the cause of dropping out and see if that could be prevented.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS ON EFFECT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

5.1 Introduction

Participants' responses revealed that socio-cultural factors are as significant as educational factors in female students' dropout from high schools. This chapter summarises the findings on socio-cultural factors working against female students' likelihood of completing school education. When asked about the factors responsible for girl students' dropout, the respondents raised a wide range of socio-cultural issues.

Seventeen topics emerged during the analysis of the interviews on the basis of their repeated occurrence and the respondents' emphasis on them (for details see chapter three: Methodology). Some topics such as 'effect of family's economic status' were discussed by a large number of respondents, suggesting this was one of the most significant factors. The factors listed in the table (5.1) provide a broad picture of Nepalese socio-cultural context where patriarchal family system together with economic barriers (Stromquist, 1990) continue to constrain female students' schooling outcome. Socio-cultural value system act 'as a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination via its strong defence of the family as the core unit of society'. This persistently 'identifies women as mothers and housekeepers, thus creating an artificial but overwhelming 'private' realm for women and a 'public' world for men' (*Ibid.*, p.11). Such reasons provide an answer to why female students lag behind in educational pursuit and why they quit schooling early.

Some issues such as poverty, early marriage, unequal workload at home, patriarchal family system that the interviews unravelled were common. Some issues such as children being attracted by cash trades such as collecting *yarshagumba* or *rudrasha* or making the bamboo stool were region specific where as other issues were applicable to all localities within Nepal. But other issues such as migration, foreign employment, dowry and superstition were new findings. Detailed discussion of each issue follows the table.

Table 5. 1 Socio-cultural Factors and Responses

SN	Nodes	No of Interview Sources	No of references
1	Family's economic status	58	71
2	Parents' awareness	43	47
3	Marriage	39	43
4	Household work and household responsibility	32	36
5	Gender bias at home and in society	26	32
6	Parents' level of education	19	22
7	Problems in family	19	24
8	Foreign employment or in-country jobs	22	23
9	Ethnic minority or caste system	18	22
10	Peer influence	10	10
11	Patrilineal family system	6	9
12	Migration	7	7
13	Dowry	3	3
14	Superstitious beliefs	3	3
15	Conflict between parents	2	2

5.2 Effect of Family's Economic Status

All the respondents who mentioned the family's economic status as a significant factor for girl students' dropout discussed the cases of dropouts in economically backward families. Fifty-eight respondents claimed that the family's poor economic status was responsible for girls dropping out of school. Among them were nine DEO staff, four girls who dropped out from school, five head teachers, ten parents, 13 students, 17 teachers. These respondents argued that poverty was the root cause of many other problems such as keeping elder children at home to look after their younger siblings, marrying their daughters off early, starting work and not being regular at school. These respondents uncovered a situation in which family responsibility, household economy, and gender preference (Huber, 1988) together worked against girls' schooling.

5.2.1 Working Parents Pull Elder Daughters out of School

Eighteen respondents (ten teachers, five DEO Staff, three students in school) claimed that parents of low-income families pulled their elder daughters out of school to take charge of household tasks such as looking after their younger siblings because such parents had to go out to work. These respondents said that such parents struggled to make a living and for them to earn their daily meal was more important than their children's education. Daughters fell victim to this situation more than sons because such parents thought that daughters' education was unimportant. Therefore, responsibility for housework and childcare came early in a girl's life (Huber, 1988).

'The family's financial condition causes restriction. Without parents going out to work, they cannot manage their meals. Or if elder children do not look after their younger siblings, parents cannot go to work. Parents not being able to go to work means no food for the family. The strange thing is their choice of the daughter for this. This happens because they do not think daughters should be educated.'

- DEO staff from mountains

Seven respondents (four teachers and three parents of students in school) said that even if there were no younger siblings to look after, working parents pulled their daughters out of school in order to take care of household work such as taking cattle out to graze and cooking meals for the family. The daughters also went to collect firewood and grass from the jungle to feed cattle. They also said that if such parents had an elder son and an elder daughter, their choice usually would be for the daughter to drop the studies.

5.2.2 Working Class Parents Pull Daughters Out of School to Help with Family Finances

Three DEO staff, three head teachers, six teachers and two students in school (13 respondents) argued that some parents who struggled to make a living pulled their daughters from schools to send them to work. This normally happened at the time of planting crops during monsoon. These respondents said that some parents kept

their daughters away from school throughout monsoon and sent them back to school in September or October. The daughters then could not pass the grade promotion examinations and dropped out.

'If you send your daughter out to work the whole of the monsoon and send her back to school only to sit for the examinations, how can they cope with their studies and how can they get through the examinations? That's why the daughters stop going to school.'

- Male teacher from hills

Two parents and three teachers (five respondents) spoke about the families who worked in brick factories in districts such as Bhaktapur. They said that parents there pulled their daughters out of schools and put them to work in brick factories.

Seven respondents (two DEO staff, one head teacher, three students and one parent) claimed that a number of families with low economic status pulled their daughters out of schools and put them to someone else's house as domestic helper. These parents used their daughters' salary on household things.

A mother of three daughters and one son who had put three of her daughters to someone's house as domestic helpers said she could not afford to educate her daughters but she would try her best to educate her son who was the youngest.

'Sir, I could not afford to send all of them to school. Although the school fee is free, I needed money for the uniforms and stuff. Only one daughter got some scholarship but that was not enough. So I found some nice families for them to work in. They are happy there. One is in Birgunj, the other in Pokhara and the third one in Kathmandu. I get some help from them. I have a plan to educate this son as much as I can. Let's see.'

- Mother of girls who dropped out (Terai region)

5.2.3 Low Income Parents Attracted by Modern Way of Living

Gender preference came at play when parents of low economic status were attracted by consumer goods such as television and mobile phones. Seven teachers said that such parents were influenced by the life of style and fashion and pulled their daughters out of schools to put them to work to obtain consumer goods.

‘One person works; one person earns to feed the family of seven. They want to catch up with the demand of modern way of living: gas stove, fashionable gadgets such as TV and mobile phones at home. For that reason, they put their grown- up daughters to daily wages.’

- Male teacher from mountains

5.2.4 Certain Cash Trades Attract Children from Low Income Families: Effect of Region

Three head teachers, ten teachers and five parents (18 respondents) from two Himalayan districts and one district from the plains mentioned that certain cash trades specific to the area attracted children towards earning cash. Such trades were: collecting *Yarsagumba* (*Cordyceps sinensis*) in the mountains of western Nepal, collecting *rudraksha* (seeds from a tree) in Sankhuwasabha and making bamboo stools called *muda* in Jhapa.

Ten teachers said that children (both boys and girls) from low status economic families quit their studies and started doing such jobs.

‘It is the parents’ responsibility that their children continue at schools but they seem to ignore this and encourage children to make money through selling rudrakshas. We try to convince parents not to let their children quit studies but they do not listen to us. It’s like yarsagumba in western Nepal but it’s spoiling children.’

- Male teacher from mountains

5.3 Effect of Parental Awareness and Parents’ Level of Education

Forty-three respondents (seven DEO staff, three students' who dropped out from school, four head teachers, five parents, 11 students in school and 13 teachers) claimed that the root cause of female students' school dropout was lack of parental awareness about female education. Nineteen respondents (four DEO staff, four parents, six students in school and five teachers) mentioned that parents' own low level of education caused poor awareness. This caused female student dropout.

Thus, parental education was positively associated with parental awareness which worked as determining factor for gender preference and progression of child schooling (Saddiqui and Iram, 2007). All the respondents, except for parents, felt that parental awareness and the parents' level of education were significant: better educated parents were more aware of the value of education for their daughters whereas less educated or illiterate parents were not aware of it. But some parents were in contradiction with other respondents (see 5.2.3).

5.3. 1 Parental Awareness and Socio-cultural Tradition

Out of 43 respondents who spoke about parental awareness, 16 (Five DEO staff, four head teachers and seven teachers) stressed that the most important cause of female student dropout from schools was the level of parental awareness that was influenced by inherited ideas from the age-old socio-cultural tradition; the tradition that defined a power relation between male and female members of a family: males superior to females and females primary function was child bearing (Stromquist, 1990). Such traditional idea made parents think that daughters needed to be literate and that was enough for them.

'Many parents do not know why education is important. They think girls need to be literate and that's enough. They ask their daughters to leave studies to help with household work.'

-Female teacher from Terai

But the parents' voices were different. Out of five parents, three were not educated at all, and of the rest two had studied until grade eight. All of them said that they wished to educate both sons and daughters. When asked if they thought only boys should be educated, they replied that they thought education was important for both sons and daughters.

' There may be some parents who think only sons should be educated or education has no use. But I think we are blind without education. It is important for both boys and girls. I had to leave school because my parents were ignorant about the value of education. They had financial problems also. But now I think I will educate my children by all means. I work as a carpenter. My son is in grade nine and my daughter in grade six. My daughter is doing better than my son. I will do my best to make sure that they get education.'

-Male parent from hills

5.3.2 Low Economic Status, Family Size and Low Level of Awareness

It was found that awareness toward female education was poor in parents from low economic status. Gender choice in educating children favoured male children in such parents (Siddiqui and Iram, 2007). Four DEO staff, three head teachers, five teachers and six students in school (18 respondents) argued that most parents from low economic family backgrounds had a low level of awareness of female education. When asked if this was the case everywhere in the district and across the region, these respondents replied that, generally, parents and guardians from poor families were less aware and the cases of dropout were in such families.

Two DEO staff also linked the family's economic status with parents' awareness toward family planning. They emphasised that such parents were not aware of child spacing or proper family planning, resulting in a large number of children. Consequently, daughters were compelled to quit studies.

'But the problem is among other people. People who are poor tend to have a large family. This is because of lack of awareness about family health and

education. Normally, they have many children, at least six or seven. The parents have to go to the fields to work, and the elder sibling will have to look after the younger ones.

The questions are: why should they think only daughters should look after their younger siblings? Why should they have so many children—also without proper spacing (having a baby every year)?'

- Male DEO staff from mountains

5.3.3 Parents' Level of Education and Female Students' Dropout: Differing Perspectives

Nineteen respondents (four DEO staff, four parents, six students in school and five teachers) linked the level of parental education to female student dropout. Out of them, four DEO staff and five teachers discussed gender preference in a family. According to them, educated parents were more likely to educate both sons and daughters, whereas less educated parents or the parents with no education were more likely to educate sons.

'Educated parents tend to educate all their children; the gender preference is weak. Less educated or illiterate parents have a gender preference and they ignore the importance of education for both sons and daughters. However, they prefer sons to have a proper education.'

- DEO staff from hills

Five teachers said that parental level of education significantly determined whether or not female students completed their school education. Their logic was that educated parents knew why they should educate their children; they could think beyond household problems and household finances, but the uneducated parents from backward societies could not think beyond everyday chores.

Four parents did not agree that all uneducated parents were unaware of the value of education for their children. Two of them said they regretted that they had no education but they were determined to ensure that their children had good

education. Two other parents provided their views, saying that there were two types of parents: some of them cared about children's education and others ignored this.

'The parents without education are of two types. One type of parents are aware of their children's education. They say although they could not study, they will not deprive their children of the opportunity. Others are not aware at all. They do not know the value of education as they struggle for living.'

-Mother of a student in school from mountains

Six students voiced concerns similar to teachers. They said that parental education was an important factor for girls to complete their school education. These students argued that parents with no education thought in a traditional way which caused female students difficulty.

'The parents are not aware of education and its benefits. Lack of awareness is among the parents who have no education.'

- Female student in school from hills

'If parents are uneducated that creates a problem for girls. They think in a traditional way.'

-Male student in school from Terai

In spite of some parents' disagreement about intergenerational link between parental education and daughters' probability of completing school education, majority of respondents agreed that parents' education weakened gender stereotyping in terms of daughters' schooling (Azam, 2011).

5.4 Effect of Marriage and Effect of Household Responsibility

Marriage and household responsibility were widely discussed factors during the interviews. Thirty-nine respondents (Five DEO staff, four female students who dropped out from school, four head teachers, seven parents, eight students in school and 11 teachers) claimed that early marriage was the main factor that caused female

student dropout from school. Likewise, 32 respondents (Three DEO staff, two students who dropped out, four parents, 14 students in school and nine teachers) claimed that female students were given too much household work, which was a major barrier to their studies.

5.4.1 Marriage and Socio-cultural Tradition

Out of 39 respondents who commented about marriage, 11 respondents - three DEO staff, three head teachers and five teachers - argued that socio-cultural traditions about relationship and marriage were to be blamed for girls' dropout from schools.

'The girls elope with boys and quit studies. The reason for this is they wish to marry but the parents do not allow them. So, they run away. Our social culture does not allow boys and girls to have relations openly. So, the only way they can be together is through marriage. For that reason, they run away and marry themselves. They never return to schools because it is rare for girls to continue schooling after they get married.'

-DEO staff from hills

Three teachers said that it might be possible for boys to go back to school and continue their studies after they got married, because boys could cope with the queries and comments from the students and teachers, and they did not have to take any extra responsibility, but it was almost impossible for girls to go back to school. The family system also discouraged girls to go back to school after marriage.

A male student narrated a story about his brother: an example of how a relationship forced them to marry and quit their studies.

'My brother had a relation with a girl and because of his physical relation with her he had to marry. The girl's parents came to know that he had that kind of relationship. They took that issue as a matter of their prestige and their daughter's future. So, he was compelled to marry her. Then he got married

but continued school until he got through SLC. But the girl, his wife, left school for good.'

-Male student from Terai

Four teachers discussed why early marriages were happening. They focused their discussion on various socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors, such as parents' concept of fulfilling their responsibility by marrying their daughters off as early as they could, lack of guidance for the youngsters and adolescent girls' desire to escape an unwelcome family environment.

'Some girls get married when they are still at school. There are three different reasons for marriage. First, the girls find boys for them and run away, dropping their studies. Second, the parents find a good match, a businessman, or someone in foreign employment, and prefer such a suit over daughter's school education. Normally, daughters, except for some girls, do not oppose their parents. And the third, the household environment is so unwelcome that some girls think of escaping and finding a match for themselves and quitting their studies.'

-Male teacher from mountains

A female teacher questioned the norms and values existing in the socio-cultural context and provided an explanation for school boys' and girls' preference for marriage over studies.

'Some girls develop a relationship with boys while they are in school and run away. Why should they leave school and hurry to run away? In our social culture, to develop a relation with a boy is taken as a surprise. Although time is changing and people are becoming more open, the problem still exists. If the relationship involves so called high caste and low caste, it involves more complications. This even causes a tragic incident in some cases. So the boys and girls think their relationship may be at risk because of social and family pressures. They run away.'

- Female teacher from Terai

5.4.2 Effect of Region on Marriage and Dropout

Three DEO staff and four teachers in Jumla in the western mountainous region, said that cultural events such as the seasonal *mela* (a cultural fair) specific to that location provided freedom for boys and girls to have open social interaction and develop relationships. Such interaction in the form of *dohori* (a conversational folk duet popular in western Nepal - song and dance continued through the night) ended up with a boy winning a girl and running away with her.

'In my opinion, marriage is the first reason for girls' dropout. It is changing a bit here in Jumla, but the problem is still there. Girls get married early. There is the tradition of singing and dancing during a festival. The girls and boys get closer at that time and then they elope. Parents also want to get their daughters married early.'

- Female teacher from mountains

One head teacher and two teachers from Kathmandu also mentioned such a cultural event in an ethnic community, Tamang, in the rural outskirts of Kathmandu valley.

'I'll give you an example of what I saw when I was in the rural school near Dakshinkali. The majority of population there is Tamang. The Tamangs have their own unique culture. During any of their cultural celebrations or festivals the youths gather and sing together. There's a kind of question and answer among boys and girls through songs. They compete in singing and dancing. At the end of it, a boy holds a girl's hand and takes her with him. They marry and quit schooling. Normally at grade 8 or 9 they leave the school.'

- Head teacher from hills

Ten respondents (Two DEO staff, one head teacher, four teachers and two students) from Rautahat (a district from Terai) and Rolpa (a district from the hills) said that the girls were married quite early there. Even without any specific reason the tradition was such that the girls were married off quite early.

'In the case of girls, particularly in the context of our district, they marry very young. However much you explain to them, and we have been doing it as much as we could, they keep doing it. Even at grade five, or six some girls get married and dropout.'

- Male teacher from hills

5.4.3 Adults' Versus Children's Perspectives on Early Marriage

Conflicting narratives (Antin et al., 2014) emerged while discussing early marriage and its effect on girls' school dropout. Three parents of girls who dropped out said that to marry and to dropout was their own choice. They said they wanted to educate their daughters but the girls found their husbands themselves and quit studies.

'I don't think we wish our children to dropout from school. But children have their own way these days. Their attention is not on school or on studies, but on something else. Do you think they care to listen to us? When I came to know that my daughter started liking a boy, I tried to convince her. I said this was a time for her to study. I warned her that these sorts of things might distract her. But after a month or so she did not come back home. Later I found that she had run away with him.'

-Male parent of a girl (who dropped out from school) from Terai

Children's narratives unravel the other side of the reality. A question whether parents seriously hear their children, especially daughters, emerges. The issue of gender and patriarchy reappears. Seven children, all of them currently in school, disagreed with the parents. They blamed parents for forcing their daughters to get married and drop their studies. They argued that some parents considered spending on their daughters' education useless.

'The reason my sister left was not her own choice. Parents decided it. They thought if she kept studying up to higher grades, they may have to spend a

good amount of money on her. So they hurried and fixed her marriage. She wanted to study but she could not go against parents' will.'

-Female student in school from mountains

According to these children, parents took their daughters' marriage as something they wished to do as early as they could, but they were not in a hurry for their sons' marriage. These respondents said that if parents found someone they thought would be a suitable match for their daughter, they ignored their daughter's opinion and feelings and arranged a marriage.

'For a girl, some parents compel her to marry early, as they find a nice proposal from a man, then they just agree and convince her to marry. The girl's aim, thoughts and feelings are ignored by elders.'

- Female student from hills

5.4.4 Household Responsibility and Dropout

All 32 respondents (Three DEO staff, two students who dropped out, four parents, 14 students in school and nine teachers) stated that household work was the most difficult barrier for female students to overcome and graduate from high schools. Nine teachers' argument was that parents' attention was on training their daughters to be future housewives, but not on education. For that reason, the parents kept their daughters busy with household work, leaving them with little time for studies. The frequency of being absent from school also pushed them towards quitting studies.

'Girls normally have more responsibilities at home. Especially in the rural area, parents' attention is on training daughters in household work, such as cooking etc. instead of allowing some free time for their studies. Female students are often absent from school. They remain absent frequently and finally stop coming to school. '

- Female teacher from mountains

Two female students who dropped out from school revealed that the parents' attitude towards daughters was like *arkako ghar jane jat* (the ones who ultimately have to go to others' houses meaning their husband's house). They said that was the reason for female students' dropout from school.

Two of the parents were the parents of the girls who dropped out from school. They said that parents had problems they could not avoid and to pull their children out of school early was not their choice but compulsion. The remaining two parents were the parents of the students who were in school. They said that not all parents were in a similar situation and to say that all parents did not want to educate their daughters was wrong.

'You know, I don't like it when people say parents do not want to educate their daughters. All parents do not have similar financial backgrounds and all parent do not have the same social and geographical situation. Parents in Jumla and Humla may have one kind of difficulty and awareness and parents in Kathmandu have another kind of problems and awareness. Even within a district, parents in a village may have one problem but the parents in another village may have another. The government's policy should recognise this and they should plan so that It is the whatever problems children and parents have, they make sure that children complete their school education.'

-Male parent of a girl in school from hills

Eight students in school raised the issue of too much work at home because of which girls wanted to marry and go away from their parents. Their logic was that the pressure of study and stress at home made them drop out from school.

'One of my close friends left because her father shouted at her every day, didn't let her go to school regularly and gave household work. She got fed up and left the school at seventh grade. So bad treatment from elders at home is a reason for girls' dropout.'

- Female student in school from Terai

Six students in school made a distinction between household responsibilities girls have before marriage and the ones they have after marriage. They said that after marriage when girls went to their husband's house, they needed to adjust to the new household environment. Their role changed from *chhori* (daughter) to *buhari* (daughter-in-law).

'When a girl gets married she cannot think of continuing her school education because of the tradition in our family system. In her new family, she needs to keep her husband happy by making all other members of the family happy. This is possible if she does all the household work herself. She becomes buhari (daughter-in-law). So when she is a chhori (daughter) in her parents' house, she can say that she cannot do all the work because she has to study. But in her husband's house she cannot say this, nor is it acceptable. Clearly, the household responsibilities at her parents' house are different from the household responsibilities at her husband's house. So, marriage means the end of her study.'

- Female student in school from hills

5.5 Effect of Gender Bias at Home and Patrilineal Family System

In the patrilineal family system male members of a family are entitled to inherit titles, rights and property. Twenty-six respondents (five DEO staff, one head teacher, one parent, ten students, nine teachers) mentioned that gender bias at home and in society affected the retention rate of female students. They said that the marriage and family system operated in such a way that preference was given to sons over daughters. Similarly, six respondents (two DEO staff, two teachers and two students) argued that the patrilineal family system was responsible for making parents unenthusiastic about their daughters' education. All the respondents said that the root of gender bias lay in the patrilineal family system.

5.5.1 Gender Bias: Sons Go to Better Schools, Girls Dropout

Two DEO staff, three head teachers, six teachers and four students in school (15 respondents out of 26) revealed that many parents sent their sons to private schools although there were high costs, but the same parents sent their daughters to public schools. Such parents thought that sons needed quality education, whereas, for daughters, it was enough to be literate.

'I have some friends and I have seen what they have done. They have enrolled their sons in well-known private schools with hostel facilities in Hetauda and daughters go to the village community public school. Why so? If they choose a public school, why only for girls? Or if they choose private school, why only for boys? I think they have a wrong perception that their sons will support them in their old age. This is an outdated concept.'

- DEO staff from Terai

5.5.2 Male Centred Social Context

Four female teachers and five female students (9 respondents) discussed the male centred social context where male members of society made important decisions. They said that male members wanted to see females domesticated: looking after household things and children. For them the effect of this was on female student's retention rate.

'If a political party calls a meeting in a village to discuss something important, most of the men go there. Women remain at home. If a school calls a parents' meeting, mostly men go there, except for a few exceptions. There is a general idea that such things are male things. And, surprisingly, females neither show any interest in such things nor have courage to protest. They are made to accept this. The effect of this is on girls' schooling outcome.'

- Female teacher from hills

These female teachers also gave examples of some jobs which were always occupied by men. They questioned why females were excluded from being enrolled in the national army, being a driver, in the police force or a pilot.

Another issue these female teachers raised was that of parental emphasis on sons. They said that it began from the time a lady became pregnant. In some families, a mother was forced to abort a baby when they knew that she was going to have a baby girl. They often went to a private clinic to get it checked. Three of these five female teachers rejected the idea that gender preference was weak in educated families.

'I don't think educated people do not have gender preference. I have seen educated people with very strong preferences. I give one example: A man in our village had three daughters. He was a university graduate. He had a fourth daughter. He and his mother treated the wife badly for giving him only daughters. Isn't that utterly silly? His friends, all educated, used to call him 'pidit' (a sufferer) because all his children were daughters. He had a fifth child, a son. Then he was quite happy. He is not the only one to behave that way. There are many such educated people.'

- Female teacher from Terai

The female students complained that even the class monitors were chosen from boys and the girl students rarely got a chance to be a school captain. They argued that there were practices which discouraged girl students from gaining confidence in extracurricular activities and taking up the role of leader.

'If one girl becomes a class monitor or a school captain, that gives confidence to all the girls students in school. Otherwise, girls can never think of being a leader or doing something that needs confidence and courage. Although these things have no direct effect on dropout, they have some kind of effect.'

- Female student from Terai

5.5.3 Religious Belief: Root of Gender Bias

Seven respondents (two DEO staff, three teachers and one head teacher) discussed the influence of religion on gender bias at home and in the wider context of the socio-cultural context. They said that as Hindus were over 80% of the population, the influence of Hinduism was widespread in society, but the influence of other religions was negligible. The head teacher said that Hinduism imposed a caste system and a book such as Manusmriti considered women subordinate to men.

‘Although the influence of Manusmriti has grown weaker because of modern education and growing awareness in common people, the gender bias still remains. The root of this is Hinduism and Hindu scriptures such as Manusmriti. There are good number of Brahmins who think that Manusmriti was Brahma’s voice. Manusmriti states that a woman is not an independent human being but subordinate to a man. And parents secure a heavenly abode after their death if they marry their daughter off before her first menstruation. For that reason, some parents arrange their daughters’ marriage quite early.’

- Head teacher from mountains

5.5.4 Patrilineal Family System

The results reveal that the root of socio-cultural gender issues in Nepal lie in marriage system because of the ‘differential value accorded to male and female children’ (Dube, 1988, p.11). Six respondents (two DEO staff, two teachers and two students) argued that bias towards daughters was caused by the marriage system. The parents believed that sons remained with them longer to look after them in their old age, but daughters went to their husbands’ houses after marriage. Two DEO staff said that in the context of current trends in society, both sons and daughters were going abroad for employment and emigration. So, the parents’ bias against daughters was faulty, as sons also left them alone.

‘Parents think sons look after them in their old age, as daughters go to live with their husbands after marriage. So, they send their sons to private schools

for better education and start looking for a match for daughters as soon as possible. They send their daughters to public school just to have a basic education. They do not hesitate to pull their daughters from these schools to marry them off. But what they are unable to see is sons are also leaving them alone and going abroad looking for jobs. The number of those who have gone abroad and settled there for good is growing and the parents back home are in trouble.'

- DEO Staff from Terai

Two teachers and two female students argued that the patrilineal marriage system was an excuse for people to continue imposing gender bias within a family and society. They said that things were changing for better in terms of educational access, but that female student retention was still a problem. The patrilineal marriage system was a factor that deterred girl students from graduating.

5.6 Effect of Problems in Family

Nineteen respondents (three teachers, five parents, six students in school, five students who had dropped out from school) mentioned family problems as the cause of female students' dropout from schools. They discussed different kinds of problems and explained how daughters were affected by them.

5.6.1 Death or Prolonged Illness of One of /both Parents

Nine respondents (three parents, three students who dropped out from school and three students in school) said that death or prolonged illness of one of the parents brought great misery to the family and the children's studies were affected. Most often daughters were compelled to sacrifice their studies. Three parents who spoke about the death or illness of a parent as a barrier narrated their stories. Two of them were the parents of the daughters who had dropped out from school.

The mother of a girl who dropped out from school said her husband died in a bus accident. Although she wanted her daughter to continue her schooling, her daughter dropped out. She was not sure whether the shock of her father's death or something else had stopped her going to school. She said that she tried her best to convince her daughter but failed.

Three girls who dropped out from school related their stories revealing such problems. One of them, who had lost her both parents, was taken care of by her grandparents. She was mistreated by her uncles and aunts after the death of her grandfather.

'I lost my parents when I was too young. I was living with my grandparents. It was OK while my grandpa was alive. He used to give me money to buy pens and note books. He treated me well. Once he died, I was badly treated at home. I did not have time to study. Uncles and aunts gave me so much work I had to remain absent from school from time to time. I felt they took my schooling as a burden. That's why I wanted to escape from this situation. I married a boy and ran away with him.'

-Girl who dropped out from school (Hill region)

The other girl said that her mother was seriously ill. Her father was a brick worker and she needed to take charge of the household chores. She was absent from school for a long period. Then she went back briefly and then was absent again. She eventually dropped out.

Her mother's illness was the main reason for another girl who dropped out from school. She was the eldest child and needed to take care of her younger siblings. Although her father did not force her to drop out, and her maternal uncles also helped her family, she could not continue school herself.

Three students who were in school mentioned that the death of one or both parents caused a huge problem in the family. They said that such families already struggled

to earn their living and once one of the parents died, it caused big trouble. The pressure of this fell on the children as well and the older girls in the family had no alternative except to drop out from school.

'Some girls I know very well have left because they lost their father or mother. One of them is Saraswati. Her mother worked in tea garden and died suddenly. Her father was a bus driver. He had many wives. He never brought his earnings home. Her mother ran the family. Poor Saraswati. She was deeply distressed by the incident. She had a younger sister and brother. She left school and started working herself. I think the local government should help such children continue their studies.'

- Student in school from Terai

5.6.2 Parental Break Up, Parents in Conflict or Alcoholic Parent

Five respondents (three students in school and two teachers) mentioned parental break up as a problem that affected children's schooling. They said that when the father married a second wife, the family environment was ruined by quarrels and fights. These respondents also mentioned other cases in which the mother ran away with another man and the father brought in a second wife. The effect of this was on older children and the most affected were the daughters, especially if they were the older ones.

'There are several such incidents. There was a girl in our school - senior to us. I think she was in grade nine. Her mother ran away with a man. She felt embarrassed about it. She stopped coming to school. Her younger brother continued but she never came back to school. Her father had new wife. She went to another district to live with some of her relatives.'

- Female student in school (Hill region)

Two teachers discussed cases of alcoholic parents and the effect of alcohol on children. They said that such cases were mostly common among *adivasi janajatis* (an indigenous ethnic group of people). In some families the parents drank *jand* (home-made liquor) from early morning and did not care about their children's school and education. This affected both boy and girl students' schooling.

'The problem is of awareness in parents, especially in the adivasi janajati, although the problem of awareness is in parents from all ethnic communities. Some parents start drinking jand in the early morning. You can imagine what happens to their children. They are already poor. In some classes, students start yawning and falling asleep and I find that they haven't had anything to eat at home. They are hungry. I'm in confusion, whether to provide them with lunch or teach. Such parents' children can leave school anytime.'

- Female teacher from Terai

5.6.3 Problem Caused by the Civil War

Three respondents - one parent, one teacher and one girl who dropped out from school - discussed the issue of the effect of a decade-long armed conflict coupled with other family problems. The girl who dropped out revealed how her father joined the rebels and disappeared.

'I am the eldest daughter. Father went to join Maoist's war and never came back. He is among those who disappeared and no one knows where he is. He may have been killed in an encounter with the army or may have gone somewhere. Mother is ill. Younger sister and younger brother are at school. Mother had to undergo a surgery. She cannot work. For that reason, I had to leave the school.'

- The girl who dropped out from school

The parent and the teacher argued that the conflict caused death and disappearance which resulted in single parent families. Daughters suffered more than sons in single-parent families.

5.7 Effect of Foreign or In-country Employment and Internal Migration

Twenty-two respondents (two DEO staff, seven parents, eight students in school, and five teachers) linked student dropout to foreign or in-country employment. Likewise, eight respondents felt that parental movement from one place to another caused female student dropout.

5.7.1 Boys Go for Foreign Employment, Girls Start Local Jobs

Out of 22 respondents who mentioned employment as a cause of school dropout, 14 respondents (two DEO staff, seven parents and five teachers) claimed that the majority of boys went to foreign countries for employment. Boys mainly had two foreign destinations: the first was India and the second was the Gulf countries.

‘Nepal has free border with India, so it is easy for us to go to India. Most boys leave school and go to different Indian cities to work. They do whatever work they can get, mostly menial works. Some boys – I don’t know how - manage to have a false date of birth in their certificates to look older and go to the Gulf countries.’

- Male teacher from hills

These respondents said that girls did not leave school to go abroad on their own. They looked for local jobs. Parents of low income families allowed their daughters to work as trainees or start a job.

‘My maternal sister’s daughter recently left school at grade eight to start training for work. One of our cousins in the bazaar helped her get this. She has started learning sewing. The family have always struggled to run their

household. They hope she will help them financially in the future. Probably she will work in a tailoring shop later.'

-Parent of a student in school (Hill region)

Three parents said the normal trend for boys was to go abroad. However, some boys from the rural countryside left school and went to the cities within Nepal to work in hotels and restaurants and in public vehicles as *khalasi* (driver's helper; a gate man). Besides this, the boys did any kind of menial work they found in the cities.

5.7.2 Effect of Internal Migration

Internal and external migration is not limited to a particular group or class of people. It occurs among all kinds of people. However, the results indicate that females' school education was affected mostly in working class people. Seven respondents (One parent, one head teacher, one student in school and four teachers) argued that movement of parents from one place to another had a strong effect on female students' drop out from schools. According to them such working-class people did not have a permanent job and moved from place to place for work.

Four teachers said that migration posed these people challenges in terms of cost and social integration. The children faced even bigger challenges. The teachers also said that the main challenge for girl students was that of safety.

'The first reason for leaving school is of migration. The working-class people do not have a permanent home; they move from work to work. So once they go they take their children with them. Some of these people never send their daughters to school in the new place. Some female students do not feel comfortable and safe in the new place and stop going to school themselves.'

-Female Teacher from Terai

The head teacher argued that there was a strong relation between migration and female student dropout. He also said that migration played a significant role but

other factors such as parents' awareness and parents' economic status also worked against female students' school retention. He said that the issue of parents' economic status had a strong relationship to many other social factors.

One parent said that some workers who migrated to a new place did not allow daughters to continue because migration caused problems in managing their household affairs. One student in school (female) provided evidence of a migrated family whose daughter had to drop out.

'One of my friend's family migrated to another district because her father worked as a mistri (carpenter) and he had to move there. After they moved there, something happened and her father did not start his work immediately. They had some kind of money crisis. So instead of going to school, she started working herself to help her family. She collected niguro (tendrils or stems of a fern plant, eaten as a vegetable) at the jungle-side lowland and took that to the chowk for selling. If they had not moved there, she would have continued her school here.'

-Female student in school from Terai

5.8 Effect of Ethnic Minorities and the Caste System

Eighteen respondents raised issues related to ethnic minorities and the caste system when asked about factors affecting female students' school retention. Among them were four DEO staff, three head teachers, two students in school and nine teachers.

5.8.1 Ethnic Minority and Caste System and Female Students' Dropout: Differing Views

The school in Jumla was in the middle of a *dalit* community. Conducting field work there gave an idea of the place these marginalised group of people had in the larger frame of caste system. Observing the level of economic status, educational awareness parents had, it was evident that the idea of stratification was extended to all other areas of economic, political, religious and cultural life, keeping them at bay

from power and governance. Although some respondents had differing views regarding effect of the system, majority of them agreed that the caste system had an effect on females schooling outcome.

Twelve respondents out of 18 (two DEO staff, two head teachers, and eight teachers) argued that ethnicity and caste system had an effect on female students' dropout. But three respondents (two DEO staff, one head teacher) said that the ethnic minorities and the caste system had nothing to do with student dropout. They said that it happened to all kinds of people.

Twelve respondents who emphasised the effect of the caste system said that female students' dropout was among *Dalits* (a marginalised ethnic group of people) and *Janajatis* (indigenous people). These respondents linked other variables such as parental awareness and poverty to the ethnic minorities and the caste system.

'Dropout is more among Dalits and Janajatis because of poverty. Girls from these communities remain absent from time to time for housework. It is because of parental awareness. The parents in such communities never remain in touch with schools so the head teacher and teachers do not know what is going on with them. Then girls stop coming to school and we know that they have dropped out from school.'

- Female teacher from mountains

Two DEO staff made a distinction between *Dalits and Janajatis* living in towns and cities and those living in remote districts and countryside. They said that the socioeconomic backgrounds of these people also played some role on how these people behave.

'The Dalits and Janajatis in urban area such as district headquarters and bazars are different. Their economic status is better and they have better awareness, but in the remote district countryside, the situation is completely

different. They are poor and they have problems. The caste and ethnic status has effect on dropout.'

- DEO staff from mountains

Three respondents, who did not agree with the fifteen respondents' argument, said that the female students' dropout was not in one caste or ethnic group of people but among people from all castes and ethnic backgrounds. They argued that there were several governmental and non-governmental agencies working to support the people from such communities. So, their level of awareness was better now.

'Dropout happens among all kinds of students. It is not acute in one class or caste of people. The level of people's awareness is much better these days. Yet the dropout is happening and the cases of female students' dropout are more than those of boys. There are different reasons. In some cases, it is early marriage. In other cases, different kinds of family problems. But I don't think certain caste groups do have such problems. The problems are with all kinds of people and everywhere.'

- Head teacher from hills

5.8.2 Caste System, Discrimination and Dropout

In a society which is based on caste hierarchy, 'the dominant group bring more and more labour under its control resulted rather quickly in exaggerated wealth inequities and higher social positions for some and ... gained considerably more power, wealth and influence than the lower caste groups, thus bringing them higher economic status' (Subedi, 2013, p. 70). The respondents revealed that caste hierarchy and economic inequality created an imbalance in opportunity and access to public services and education.

Three respondents (two students and one teacher) discussed the issue of the caste system and the attitude of common people. The teacher said that the caste system was abolished by the law a long time ago but it was still in practice among people.

Teachers did not reveal whether teachers themselves practiced any discrimination. They accepted that the socio-cultural issues of caste and gender reproduced in schools. It reflected on students and this also had an effect on student retention. The students did not claim that this factor had strong effect on female students' dropout. They, however, said that this influenced dropout rates.

'Caste-based discrimination affects students from lower castes. In our school, I've experienced this happening. This is not done by teachers. Students themselves do it.'

- Male teacher from mountains

These respondents argued that the behavioural problems in students regarding a discriminatory attitude toward their peers was in those students whose parents had no education. Their parents themselves had such attitudes and practised untouchability at home.

'Some parents behave differently toward people from lower caste group such as Damai, Kami, Sarki etc. If a worker from such lower caste comes home, they stop him at the doorstep. They tell their children not to touch him and not to eat anything he touches. So, these children try to do the same at school. Boys and girls from lower caste group feel bad and decide to stop coming to school.'

- Female student from Terai

5.9 Effect of Peer Influence

Ten respondents (two students who dropped out, one head teacher, one parent, four students in school and two teachers) mentioned peer influence as a factor affecting student's retention rates. They argued that peer influence affected both boys and girls but boys were more affected.

5.9.1 Peer Influence Leading to Bad Habits and Dropout

Six respondents (two students who dropped out from school and four students in school) said that boys fell into a bad circle of friends, picked up bad habits such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, escaping classes and growing careless about their studies. This ultimately led them to their dropping out of school. One boy who dropped out from school accepted this and narrated his own story.

‘Ha ha... I had some friends who always escaped studies and went to the Bhatti (local liquor shop) and drank. I found it was good fun. I joined them and escaped my school. Then I failed examinations. How could I pass when I never paid attention to studies? Now I regret it. If I had continued with my studies, I would have been somebody else. So, such influence has caused many dropouts.’

-Male student who dropped out (hill region)

Four students in school said that the kind of peer circle a student belonged to, determined whether a student completed school education. If a student was in a circle of peers who were serious about learning, there was no risk of drop out. But if a student had friends who did not care about studies, there was a risk of dropout. These respondents said that peer influence also came as a pressure on many students. They said that some boys pressurised others. These students could not resist pressure and fell into bad habits. Mostly, the students who lacked interest in studies tried to influence the other students.

‘Some boys get addicted to drugs and leave their studies. There are several such boys in the villages. One or two of them influence others and they make such group.’

- Female student in school from Terai

5.9.2 Peer Influence Leading to Sexual Exploitation

One parent, one head teacher and two teachers (four respondents) discussed how girl students faced a situation which led them to become victims of sexual abuse. They said that girls from economically low backgrounds were tempted by promises of well-paid jobs. This urged them to leave their studies and go somewhere else.

'An adolescent girl from a poor family meets another girl who is wearing attractive clothing and ornaments. The girl comes under her influence. The poor girl follows her for a good job and better living conditions. Such girls are often sexually exploited. Because of this they drop out from schools. Some of them fall victim to girl traffickers.'

-Head Teacher (male) from mountains

These respondents said that girls did not take drugs or grew alcoholic like boys but girls had a different influence. They said that girl students also started normal work because of peer influence (see 5.6: effect of foreign employment or in-country job).

5.10 Effect of Dowry: Specific to a Region and Community

Three respondents (two DEO staff and one teacher) representing the *madhesi* (natives of indigenous people in the plains of Nepal) community of southern Nepal discussed the effect of dowry on girl students' school dropout.

Two DEO staff said that the practice of dowry was a stronger factor in the southern plains of Nepal in the *madhesi* community. Their argument was that the parents wanted their daughters to leave school early because less educated daughters were likely to be married with less educated boys who would demand less dowry.

'The local reason specific to the madhesi community is of dowry. You invest in girls' education, then when you get her a husband, it should be the one who

has more education than that of your daughter. An educated boy demands an expensive dowry. Most people think of that and want to keep their daughters just literate, as they cannot afford to that amount of dowry. So, the dowry is the most important factor.'

- Male DEO Staff from Terai

The teacher however said that the issue of dowry was not limited to one ethnic group or community. It was everywhere in all caste groups, but a more acute problem was in the *madhesi* community. He said that dowry was a cause of female students' school dropout and a source of domestic violence.

'Some parents want their daughters to find boys themselves to elope with. They think if there is no formal marriage, they do not have to provide as dowry. They do not care about their daughters' education. Dowry not only causes school dropout but also brings tragedy to marriages. Some girls are badly treated at their husband's house because they do not satisfy their husbands' family with dowry.'

- Female Teacher from Terai

5.11 Effect of Superstitious Belief

Three respondents (two students in school and one teacher) mentioned people's superstitious beliefs as a factor in female students' school dropout. Both students provided examples of how such beliefs led parents to a wrong decision, meaning their daughters were compelled to leave school education.

'A grade nine girl had to leave school. She had weak health. She got fainted at school every now and then. Her parents made her stop going to school. She might have had some health problem. Instead of consulting a doctor they used a local witch doctor who said she was haunted by bad spirit. The doctor suggested that they needed to move to another place and she needed to get

married. That was a superstition but nobody could convince them to take the daughter to a medical doctor and get a proper treatment.'

- Female student from hills

These respondents also mentioned people's practice of visiting local astrologers with their family members to obtain *janma kundali* (horoscopes). The astrologers observed the effect of the stars on people's lives. Such astrologers foretold people's future and prescribed some actions people needed to take to avoid possible unfortunate incidents. The respondents said that such incidents had an effect on female students' dropout.

A girl from my neighbourhood left school when she was in grade eight because of her parents' superstitious beliefs. Her parents had shown her horoscope to a local astrologer who predicted that if her marriage was delayed she would have a fatal accident. They believed it. Then coincidentally a man came to her parents with a marriage proposal. They fixed a marriage for her immediately.

-Female student from Terai

5.12 Conclusion and Summary of the Findings

The findings discussed in this chapter cover a number of issues in the Nepalese socio-cultural set-up which contribute toward female student dropout. Such issues include the effect of early marriage, unequal work division at home between sons and daughters, preference for a son's education over the daughter's, household economy, parent's level of education and awareness, gender bias at home (sending sons to private schools and daughters to public schools), male centred social context, religious beliefs, problems in the family (parental break up, conflict between parents or alcoholic parents), foreign or in-country employment and internal migration. Some more factors discussed in this chapter are the effect of ethnic minorities and the caste system, peer influence leading to bad habit or sexual exploitation, the effect of the dowry system and parents' superstitious beliefs. Respondents showed disagreement with each other regarding some issues such as the effect of parental

education and awareness, effect of ethnicity and the caste system and the effect of early marriage (See 5.3.3, 5.4.3 and 5.8.1 for details).

The family economy drew the largest number of responses (58) from interviewees as a cause of female students' dropout and the factor of conflict between parents drew only two responses. The findings of such issues have been put in order below, issues with the highest number of responses coming first followed by other issues with a lesser number of responses. Survey responses regarding socio-cultural issues have also been presented.

- **Issues related to family economy:** According to the interview participants, working class family daughters were required to take charge of household responsibilities as parents went out to work. In some families, parents got their daughters work to help family finances, e.g. take a job in a brick factory or put daughters as domestic helpers. In other families, parents got their daughters work so that they could buy consumer goods such as a TV or mobile phone. The socio-economic status of people determined how they perceived daughters' education (details in section 5.1).
- **Parental education, awareness and behaviour related issues:** The parents' responses during interview sessions that they valued education for girls contradicted what they actually did. The level of parental education had an effect on parental awareness and female education. In a broader cultural context, there was a tradition of preference for the male child's education. Interview respondents said that parental behaviour such as alcoholism in parents and conflict between parents severely affected children's education (see section 5.5). Female students suffered as they were required to look after younger siblings and take charge of household responsibilities. Respondents linked awareness to the parental level of education. Of 28 parents who participated in survey, only seven had education up to bachelor level.

- **Marriage and relationship:** The interview respondents said that both marriage and relationship worked as a barrier against continuation of schooling in the socio-cultural context of Nepal (see section 5.3). A girl would have difficulty continuing study after marriage because she would be required to take charge of household chores. Society did not take a girl's relationship with a boy as a normal happening, but as something suspicious. For that reason, a girl in a relationship often quit studies to get married. In some parts of the country such as Jumla, there was a tradition of early marriage which was a cause of girl students' dropout. The majority of survey respondents (97.2%) thought marriage should not get in the way of female students' schooling.
- **Gender bias:** Interview respondents said that sons went to private schools considered as better-quality schools and daughters went to public schools (see section 5.4). If a family faced financial or any other kind of difficulty, daughters were made to drop out from school. Parents' thought sons stayed with them and looked after them in their old age as daughters married into other family. The socio-cultural context was male-centric, where leadership roles were often taken by male members of the society. Survey respondents showed a strong disagreement to gender bias as 95% of them rejected the idea that only sons should be educated.
- **Death, prolonged illness of parents, parental break-up:** This finding was from qualitative interviews (see section 5.5). The respondents said daughters suffered if one or both parents had prolonged illness, if one or both parents died and if parents broke up. They lacked economic and emotional support and left their schooling.
- **Foreign and in-country-migration and foreign and in-country employment:** Interviews revealed that working-class parents tended to move from place to place with their jobs. This had a strong effect on female students' schooling. Foreign employment was mostly in India and Middle Eastern countries. Parents'

in-country movement affected females. Female students also started working. Boys went to India or Gulf countries to work, dropping their schooling. Certain cash trades specific to some areas attracted children towards earning cash (see section 5.6). The effect of foreign and in-country migration on female students' dropout was not included in the survey questionnaire. Interview respondents introduced this during the interview sessions.

- **Caste and ethnicity:** The stringent adherence to caste hierarchy causes not only 'physical distance' between people, but also creates a feeling of 'abhorrence' towards people from a low caste and reduced 'public interaction' (Madox & Esposito, 2013). This study found that these influences affected girl students' schooling outcome. Interview respondents said that certain marginalised castes (*dalits* and *janajatis*) had acute problems of female students' drop out (see section 5.7). Respondents in both qualitative interviews and the survey agreed that *Dalits*, *Madhesi* and *Janajatis* had the most cases of dropout. The reason for this was parental education, parental awareness and frail family economies. Of 71.1% of survey respondents who provided answers 39.5% mentioned *Dalits*, 16.6% mentioned *Madhesi* and 14.1% mentioned *Janajatis* being most at risk of female students' dropout.
- **Peer influence:** It was found from the interviews that peer influence had a strong effect on both male and female students' dropout (see section 5.8). Peers influenced boys in getting into bad habits such as becoming alcoholic and taking drugs and girls into bad habits such as sexual activity or exploitation, which eventually led male and female students to drop out from school.
- **Effect of dowry system:** The issue of dowry was raised by four interview respondents (see section 5.9). The problem of dowry was specific to and acute in the southern plains among indigenous *madhesi*. Parents regarded educating daughters as a double investment. Educated daughters required more educated husbands who would make a heavy demand for dowry. For that reason, parents did not wish to educate daughters and thus daughters dropped out.

- **Superstitious religious beliefs:** Three interview respondents said that was an effect of superstition and religious belief on female students' education (see section 5.10). The most influential religion in the country was Hinduism. This religious belief encouraged parents to arrange their daughters' marriage early. Some parents thought getting their daughters married before their first menstruation would be a pious act. Some parents consulted local astrologers and showed their daughters' horoscopes to find when to get their daughters married. These parents would drop their daughters' schooling if the astrologer suggested to them that early marriage was required. However, the survey respondents were divided between positive and negative responses in terms of the effect of religion on female students' dropout (see section 6.3.1).

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the survey responses of 567 participants and presents the findings. To investigate the effect of school system and socio-cultural factors on female students' dropout, questionnaires were administered to seven groups of participants. Among them students were the largest group.

The first part of the survey asked participants personal demographic information such as gender, place of residence, household income, household head, religious and ethnic background and occupation. The reason for obtaining such information was to see if there was a link between the respondents' background factors and female students' dropout.

The questions about demographic information were followed by questions aimed to explore participants' perception of female students' dropout and its common indicators. This section contained Likert scale questions with five scales i.e. strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and don't know. But in the analysis, the 'don't know' answers were not included because some respondents chose not say anything about the topic, which, if included, could complicate the analysis.

The final section of the questionnaire contained three semi-open-ended questions that asked what respondents thought was the cause of female students' dropout and what the schools and the government should do to solve the problem.

6.2 Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Information

6.2.1 Gender Distribution among the Participants

On average, the number of female participants exceeded the number of male participants although the participants were selected using a random sampling method. Thus, this sampling reflects the gender composition of the population of the country. The report of Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal (2011) reveals that there

are 94 males per 100 females (CBS, 2011). The following table presents the overall picture of the participants' sample size in terms of gender and the table following it presents the gender distribution across categories.

Table 6. 1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

		Gender	
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	268	47.3
	Female	299	52.7
	Total	567	100.0

Table 6. 2 Gender and Respondents' Categories

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Gender	Male	200	19	30	19	268
	Female	280	9	0	10	299
Total		480	28	30	29	567

The table above reveals that more female students were selected than male students, whereas in other categories male respondents exceeded female respondents. The reason was that the total number of female students exceeded the total number of male students in the selected schools. But in other categories males exceeded females. The table below presents the total number of students out of which student participants were selected.

Table 6. 3 Student Population of Selected Schools

		Boys	Girls	Total	Selected for this research
Mountain	School 1	202	195	397	80
	School 2	466	438	904	80
Hill	School 3	169	186	345	80
	School 4	334	322	656	80
Terai	School 5	326	435	761	80
	School 6	163	188	351	80
Total		1660	1764	3424	480

The statistics of the student population indicates a regional effect. In the Himalayan districts boys are more than girls, but in the hill districts there is not much difference between the numbers of boys and girls. In the Terai, girls outnumbered boys in both schools.

The table below also presents the total number of DEO staff and teachers from which the respondents were selected. The reason for selection of more males among teachers and DEO staff in the sample was that in all locations, except for the high school in Kathmandu (district 4 in the table below), the number of female staff was very low.

Table 6. 4 Participants' Distribution Across the Districts and Regions in Terms of Gender

		Teachers in the Sample Schools			Staff in the District Education Offices		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Mountain	District 1	8	5	13	27	1	28
	District 2	14	8	22	17	0	17
Hill	District 3	11	2	13	21	0	21
	District 4	11	20	31	26	8	34
Terai	District 5	14	6	20	16	6	22
	District 6	12	2	14	21	1	22
Total	6	70	43	113	128	16	144

The table below shows that Rautahat had the highest number of female participants which was 56 (compared to 37 males) and both Kathmandu and Sankhuwasabha had the lowest number which was 46 (compared to 49 and 48 males respectively). Sankhuwasabha and Kathmandu had more male participants than female. The remaining four districts had more female participants.

Table 6. 5 Gender and District of Survey

	District of Survey						Total
	Rautahat	Jhapa	Kathmandu	Sankhuwasabha	Jumla	Rolpa	
Male	37	45	49	48	42	47	268
Female	56	50	46	46	53	48	299
Total	93	95	95	94	95	95	567

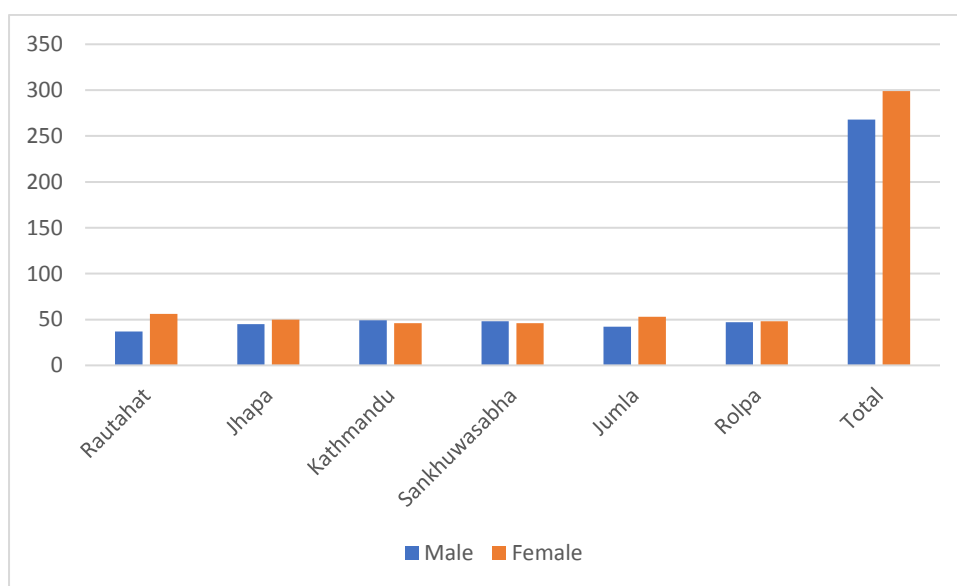


Figure 6. 1. Participants' gender distribution across districts

At regional level, female respondents outnumbered males. In the Terai and mountain regions, there were more female respondents than male, but in the hills the number of male respondents exceeded females. The Terai had the highest number of female participants and the hills had the lowest.

Table 6. 6 Gender and Region of Residence

		Region of Residence			Total
		Terai	Hill	Mountain	
Gender	Male	84	96	88	268
	Female	107	95	97	299
Total		191	191	185	567

6.2.2 Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Their Age

The respondents selected for the survey were aged between 12 and 64. Only one participant was aged over 60. Of the 480 students, 478 belonged to the 11-20 age group, whereas two students were older than 20. The youngest respondent was 11 years old (student) and the oldest was 64 years old (parent).

Table 6. 7 Respondents' Age Group Across Categories

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Age Group	11-20	478	0	0	0	478
	21-30	2	5	6	7	20
	31-40	0	14	7	3	24
	41-50	0	8	13	17	38
	51 through Highest	0	1	4	2	7
Total		480	28	30	29	567

Student respondents' age ranged from 12 to 21. The tables below present the distribution of students in terms of their age across the level of studies they are in. The first table shows male student age and the second table shows female students age. There are over age students in grade eight, nine and ten.

Table 6. 8 Male Student Participants Age Across Grades

Gender			Student Grade			Total
			8	9	10	
Male	Respondents Age Group	12	1	1	0	2
		13	2	10	1	13
		14	2	27	10	39
		15	2	21	36	59
		16	1	24	24	49
		17	0	7	20	27
		18	0	0	6	6
		19	0	2	2	4
		21	0	0	1	1
	Total		8	92	100	200

Table 6. 9 Female Student Participants Age Across Grades

Gender			Student Grade			Total
			8	9	10	
Female	Respondents Age Group	12	3	6	0	9
		13	4	18	4	26
		14	3	31	22	56
		15	2	16	65	83
		16	0	21	39	60
		17	0	12	22	34
		18	0	3	4	7
		19	0	1	1	2
		20	0	0	2	2
		21	0	0	1	1
	Total		12	108	160	280

The figure below presents the distribution of the student sample in terms of their age group. The mean value is 15.23 for the students' age selected from grade eight to ten and the standard deviation is 1.4.

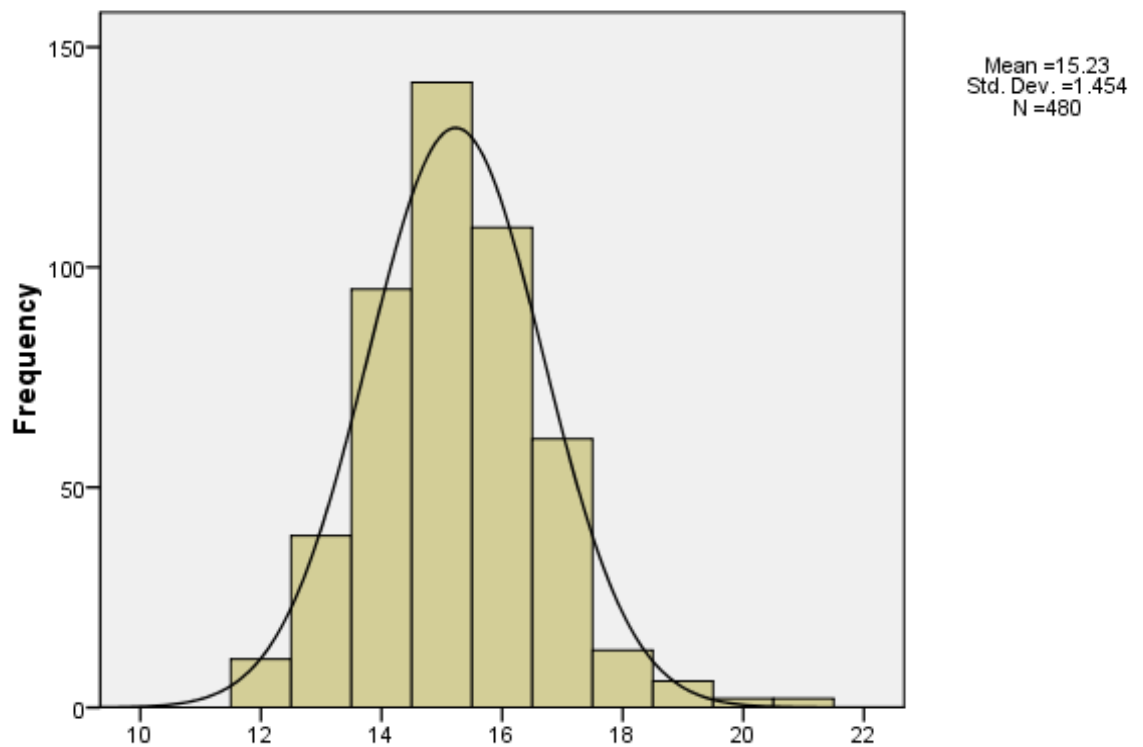


Figure 6. 2. Student participants' age group

Parents' age on the other hand showed more variability. The parent participants' age ranged from 25 years to 64. Most parents (22 out of 29) were between 30 and 50 years. Only two parents were over 50. The table and the figure below provide the details.

Table 6. 10 Age Group of Parent Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25	1	3.6	3.6	3.6
	26	1	3.6	3.6	7.1
	27	2	7.1	7.1	14.3
	30	1	3.6	3.6	17.9
	32	2	7.1	7.1	25.0
	35	4	14.3	14.3	39.3
	36	1	3.6	3.6	42.9
	38	3	10.7	10.7	53.6
	40	4	14.3	14.3	67.9
	41	1	3.6	3.6	71.4
	42	3	10.7	10.7	82.1
	44	1	3.6	3.6	85.7
	48	1	3.6	3.6	89.3
	49	1	3.6	3.6	92.9
	50	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
	64	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	28	100.0	100.0	

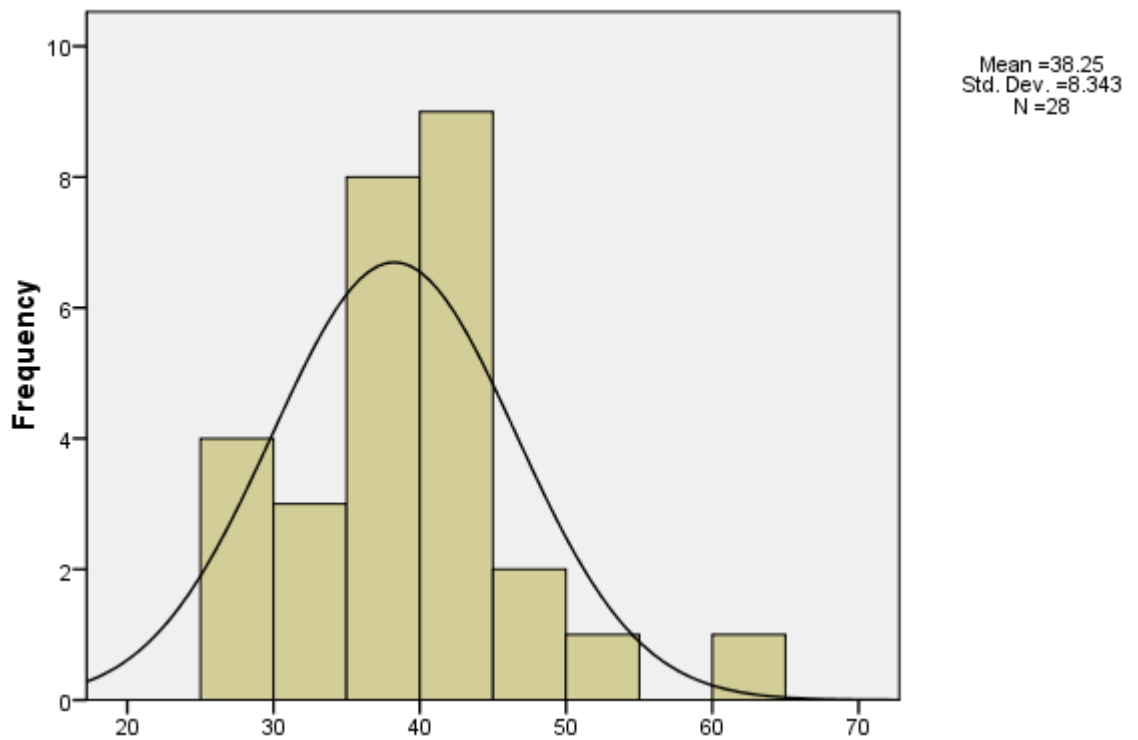


Figure 6. 3. Parent respondents' age group

Like parents, teachers and DEO staff's age showed a wide range of variation. Fifty three of 60 respondents' age was between 20 to 50. Six of the respondents have an age over 51.

The following table provides an overview of the distribution.

Table 6. 11 Teachers and DEO Staff in Terms of Their Age

		DEO Staff	Teacher	
Respondents' Age	11-20	1	0	1
	21-30	6	7	13
	31-40	7	3	10
	41-50	13	17	30
	51 through Highest	4	2	6
Total		31	29	60

6.2.3 Participants' Religious Background

According to the Nepal Population and Housing Census (NPHS,2011), the majority of people (81.34%) follow Hinduism. In the second and third position are Buddhism and Islam. But their followers are far fewer than Hinduism. The following table from the NPHS report (2011) makes it clear that Nepalese people follow 11 different religions.

Table 6. 12 Population of Nepal by Religion

SN	Religion	Population	Percentage
1	Hindu	21,551,492	81.34 %
2	Buddhism	2,396,099	9.04 %
3	Islam	1,162,370	4.38 %
4	Kirat	807,169	3.04 %
5	Christianity	375,699	1.41 %
6	Prakriti	121,982	0.46 %
7	Bon	13,006	0.04 %
8	Jainism	3,214	0.01 %
9	Bahai	1,283	0.004 %
10	Sikhism	609	0.002 %
11	Undefined	61,581	0.23 %
	Total	26,494,504	100%

The participants for this research did not belong to all 11 religious groups listed in the table above. The participants followed five different religions. Hindus were the largest group and the Buddhists were the second largest group. The rest of the participants belonged to Kirat, Islam and Christianity. An overview of the participants' religious background is presented in the table and figure below.

Table 6. 13 Respondents' Religious Background

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Hindu	489	86.2	86.2
Buddhist	38	6.7	6.7
Kirat	27	4.8	4.8
Islam	1	.2	.2
Christian	12	2.1	2.1
Total	567	100.0	100.0

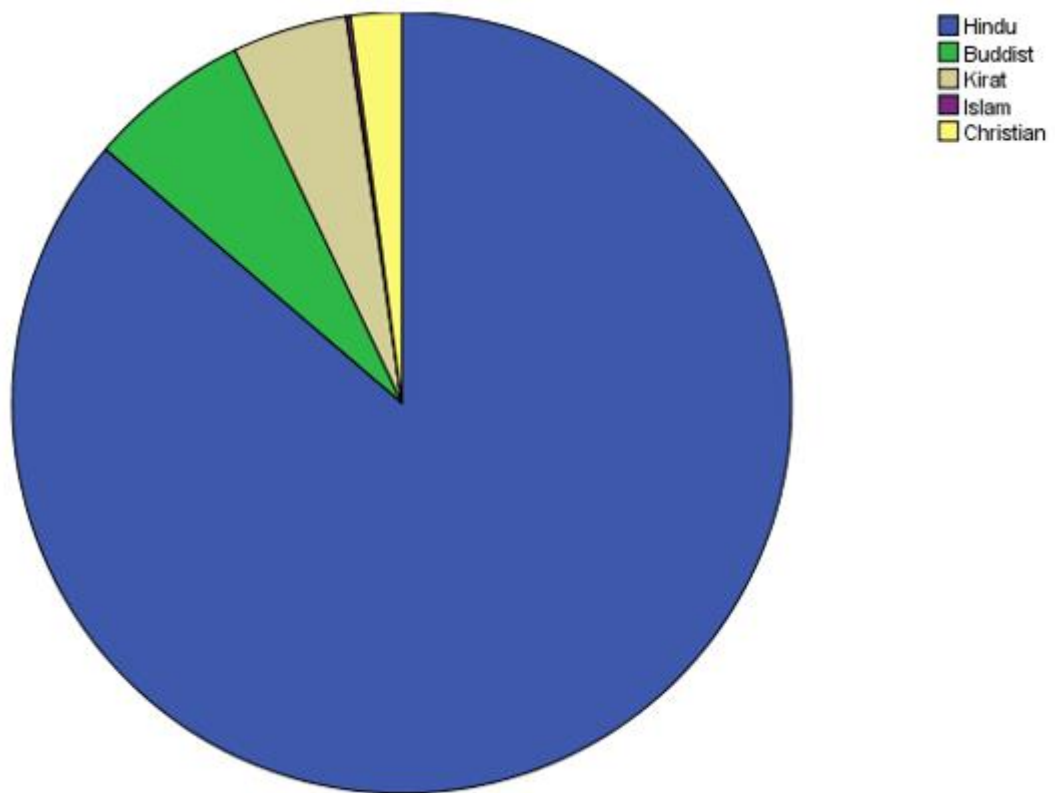


Figure 6. 4. Respondents' religious background

Looking at the participants' distribution across ecological zones, the Hindus, Buddhists, Kirats and Christians were found to be scattered in all three zones. However, those belonging to Islam were only in the Terai region.

Table 6. 14 Respondents' Religious Background and Region of Residence

		Respondents' Religious Background					Total
		Hindu	Buddhist	Kirat	Islam	Christian	
Region of Residence	Terai	160	17	2	1	8	188
	Hill	183	5	1	0	1	190
	Mountain	146	16	24	0	3	189
Total		489	38	27	1	12	567

6.2.4 Participants Distribution in Village Development Committee (VDC) and Municipality

Participants belonged to both municipalities and VDC's. But more of them belonged to municipalities. The government of Nepal has planned to develop municipalities as urban centres, but not all municipalities meet the basic requirements such as the presence of paved streets, water supply and sewerage systems or electricity, educational institutions, hospitals, etc. (Devkota, 2012). Many municipalities lack such facilities.

The participants for the survey were not evenly distributed in VDC's and municipalities. This was determined by the location of the schools randomly selected for this research because the largest group of participants were the students in school. Table 6.15 below shows that out of 567 participants, 428 lived in municipalities and 139 in VDC's.

Table 6. 15 Respondents' Place of Living

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
VDC	139	24.5	24.5
Municipality	428	75.5	75.5
Total	567	100.0	100.0

Examining the participants' place of living, village and municipality across ecological zones, in the Terai the highest number of participants were from municipalities. The

following table reveals that, in all three regions, there were more participants from municipalities than from VDC's.

Table 6. 16 Participants Across Region of Residence and Place of Living

		VDC	Municipality	
Region of Residence	Terai	29	162	191
	Hill	52	139	191
	Mountain	58	127	185
Total		139	428	567

The table above also shows the regional distribution of the participants. The response rate in the Terai and the hill regions was 100%. But in the mountain region, three respondents did not return their survey. As a result, the overall response rate was 99.47%.

6.2.5 Main Source of Participants' Household Income

According to a report published by Ministry of Agriculture Development Nepal (MoAD), agriculture is the main source of food, income, and employment for 65.7% of the country's population and about 33.1% of its GDP. More than 50% of its exports depend on agriculture (Karki, 2015). The participants' response regarding the main source of their household income reflects a similar situation as 277 (48.85%) respondents out of 567 mentioned that their main source of household income was agriculture.

Table 6. 17 Source of Household Income and Respondents' Category

		Respondents' Categories				
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	Total
Main Source of Household Income	Agriculture	260	7	6	4	277
	Business	58	6	0	0	64
	Formal Permanent Job	93	10	24	25	152
	Daily wages	32	3	0	0	35
	Foreign employment	37	2	0	0	39
Total		480	28	30	29	567

Linked to this in the survey was if the household income provided enough subsistence for the family through the year. The response shows that 74% of respondents thought the income was enough for the year. Among the students 350 of 480 thought their household income was enough for the year, but 130 students thought the household income was not sufficient to run the family for the whole year. Similarly, a significant number of DEO staff (28 of 30), teachers (22 of 29) and parents (21 of 28) answered their household income was sufficient to run the family. This shows that although the majority of respondents (74%) had sufficient income to run the family for the year, the remaining 26% of them faced problems of insufficient income for the family.

Table 6. 18 Is Household Income Enough for Subsistence?

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Is Household Income Enough for Subsistence?	Yes	350	21	28	22	421
	No	130	7	2	7	146
Total		480	28	30	29	567

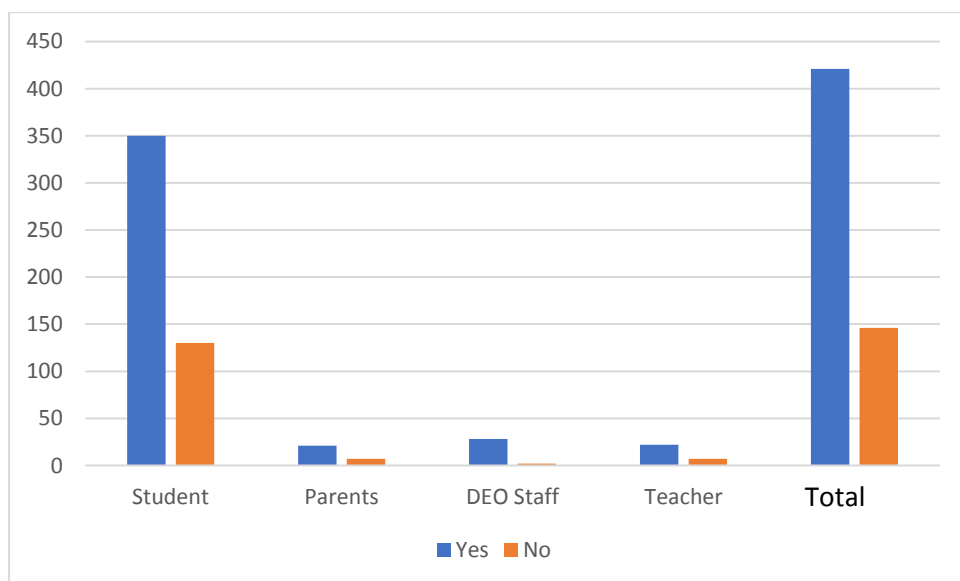


Figure 6. 5. Is household income enough for subsistence?

6.2.6 Household head (household decision maker) in Respondents' Family

Previous studies such as Sahidul (2013) found that male centred families in terms of making household decisions on children's education are biased against female students' schooling. Sahidul argues that employed mothers have better control over household decisions and stronger bargaining power, which increases the chance of a higher rate of their daughters' school retention.

To find out the situation of household decision-making process in this study, a survey question was put to the respondents: Who was the household head to make household decisions? The responses show that the majority of the respondents assert that male heads make the household decisions. Three hundred and fifty (155 male and 195 female) out of 567 (61%) respondents mentioned that the father made household decisions. Among adult respondents (Parent, DEO Staff and Teacher) 33 male respondents (seven parents, 15 DEO staff and 11 teachers) said they made the decision in their households themselves, whereas only six female respondents (two parents and four teachers) claimed themselves to be their household decision maker. Although it was not a significant number of females who made household decision themselves, it indicated a positive signal.

The table below presents the picture of how the gender role affected in the respondents' households in relation to making household decisions. The majority of employed male respondents such as DEO staff and teachers made their household decisions themselves. Out of 30 male DEO staff, 15 declared themselves to be the household head (decision maker), 11 said that their fathers were the household head and only two said their mothers were the household decision maker.

Of 19 male teachers, 11 said they were the household heads themselves, whereas six said their fathers made household decisions and only one stated that his mother makes household decisions. Similarly, out of ten female teachers, four declared themselves to be the household decision maker and six said their fathers made the

decisions. This indicates that male members were the key players in survey participants' households.

Table 6. 19 Decision Maker in the Family: Responses Across Category and Gender

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parent	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male Respondents	Decision Maker in the Family	Grandfather	17	3	0	0	20
		Grandmother	8	0	0	0	8
		Father	131	7	11	6	155
		Mother	40	1	2	1	44
		Elder Brother	2	0	0	0	2
		Elder Sister	2	0	0	0	2
		Respondent himself herself	0	7	15	11	33
		Husband/ Wife	0	1	2	1	4
	Total		200	19	30	19	268
Female Respondents	Decision Maker in the Family	Grandfather	14	0		0	14
		Grandmother	8	0		0	8
		Father	189	0		6	195
		Mother	67	2		0	69
		Elder Brother	1	0		0	1
		Elder Sister	1	0		0	1
		Respondent himself herself	0	2		4	6
		Husband/ Wife	0	5		0	5
	Total		280	9		10	299

6.2.7 Student Participants and their Level of Study

Students' for the survey were selected randomly from grades eight to ten. The selection picked more students from grade nine and ten because these grades had a larger number of students than grade eight. The following table presents the distribution of selected students in terms of their level of study across three zones: Hill, Terai and Mountain.

Table 6. 20 Participant Students' Distribution Across Regions and Grades

		Student Grade			Total
		8	9	10	
Region of Residence	Terai	13	39	108	160
	Hill	0	129	31	160
	Mountain	7	32	121	160
Total		20	200	260	480

Among the selected students, 260 were from grade ten, 200 from grade nine and 20 from grade 8. The total number of students were distributed evenly across all three regions as an equal number of respondents were selected and administered survey questionnaire in each region and the response rate was 100%.

Table 6. 21 Participant Students' Distribution Across Regions, Grades and Gender

Student Grade			Region of Residence			Total
			Terai	Hill	Mountain	
8	Gender	Male	5		3	8
		Female	8		4	12
	Total		13		7	20
9	Gender	Male	19	59	14	92
		Female	20	70	18	108
	Total		39	129	32	200
10	Gender	Male	32	17	51	100
		Female	76	14	70	160
	Total		109	34	117	260
Total	Gender	Male	56	76	68	200
		Female	104	84	92	280
	Total		160	160	160	480

6.2.8 Parent Respondents' Educational Background and Occupation

Analysing the educational background of 28 parents who responded to the survey, it is found that only seven parents had a bachelor's degree level education. Of them three were from Kathmandu. Twelve of 28 parents had secondary level education. Of the remaining nine parents, five had studied up to primary level, three were just literate and one was illiterate.

Table 6. 22 Educational Background of Parent/Guardian and District of Survey

	District of Survey						Total
	Rauta hat	Jhapa	Kathmandu	Sankhuwasabha	Jumla	Rolpa	
Illiterate	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Literate	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Primary	0	1	0	0	1	3	5
Secondary	3	2	1	3	2	1	12
Bachelor Plus	0	1	3	2	1	0	7
Total	3	5	5	5	5	5	28

Eleven parents named their occupation as agriculture. This was the highest number among the five occupation categories mentioned by parents. Interestingly, six parents from the mountain region had an office job. Five of the parents mentioned business as their occupation and two of the parents held managerial positions. The table and the figure below provide the details of the respondent parents' occupation across three regions.

Table 6. 23 Parent Respondents' Occupation

		Region of Residence			Total
		Terai	Hill	Mountain	
Parents' Occupation	Agriculture/ daily wage	5	3	3	11
	Housewife	0	3	0	3
	Business	2	2	1	5
	Clerical	0	1	6	7
	Managerial	1	1	0	2
Total		8	10	10	28

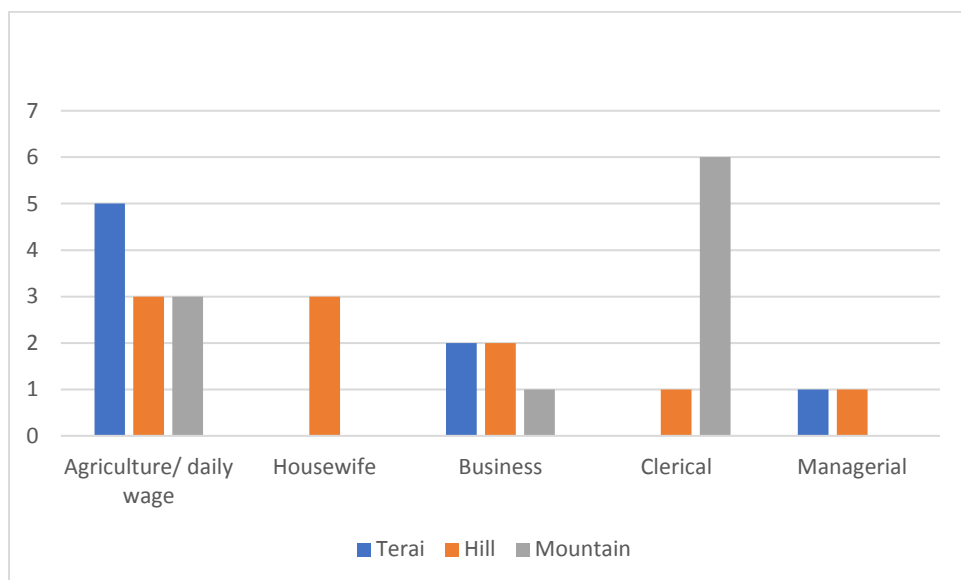


Figure 6. 6. Parent respondents' occupation

6.2.9 The Grade in Which Dropout is Most Likely

A question was asked to find the level of study at which likelihood of female students' dropout was thought to be greatest. This question gave five definite options with five grade levels from six to ten. The respondents were also given a choice 'don't know' if they were not sure. The table below shows that 383 out of 567 respondents chose definite answers. One hundred and eighty-five respondents chose the 'don't know' option.

The highest number of respondents (142) thought that girl students were most likely to drop out at tenth grade. Similarly, 130 respondents thought that girl students were most likely to drop out at eighth grade. Ninth grade was in third position because 75 respondents answered that girl students were most likely to drop out at this grade.

Table 6. 24 The Grade in Which Drop out is Most Likely: Category-wise Responses

		The Grade in Which Drop out is Most Likelihood					Total
		6	7	8	9	10	
Respondents' Categories	Student	6	12	99	58	129	304
	Parents	1	0	14	1	6	22
	DEO Staff	8	2	5	10	4	29
	Teacher	2	5	12	6	3	28
Total		17	19	130	75	142	383

6.2.10 The Ethnic Group Most at Risk of Dropout

Rao (2010) links caste system to poverty with an argument that 'lower caste members are not allowed to move up the career ladder and instead remain poor'. The respondents were asked which caste suffered most in terms of female students' school dropout rates.

Table 6. 25 The Ethnic Group Most at Risk of Drop out

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Madhesi	94	16.6
	BrahminChhetri	5	.9
	Indigenous	80	14.1
	Dalit	224	39.5
	Total	403	71.1

The responses reveal the effect of the Hindu caste hierarchy which puts Dalits at the bottom and Brahmin/Chhetris at the top. The highest number of respondents in each

category (169 students, 19 parents, 18 DEO staff and 18 teachers) said that Dalits had the most cases of girl student dropout.

The national planning commission report of 2002 states that 'women are more sufferers than men within Dalit society. As the Dalit society is systematically integrated in the patriarchal model of the Hindu caste structure, their social and economic status is much lower to that of males (Dahal et al, 2002)'.

The next affected ethnic group according to the survey response is Madhesi, people who live in the southern plains of Nepal. Ninety-four respondents thought that Madhesi had the most cases of dropout. Similarly, the survey responses have put the indigenous group of people (*Janajatis*) in third position in relation to female student dropout.

Table 6. 26 The Ethnic Group with Most Cases of Drop out: Category-wise Responses

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
The Ethnic Group with Most Cases of Drop out	Madhesi	82	3	7	2	94
	Brahmin/Chhetri	5	0	0	0	5
	Indigenous	66	4	3	7	80
	Dalit	169	19	18	18	224
Total		322	26	28	27	403

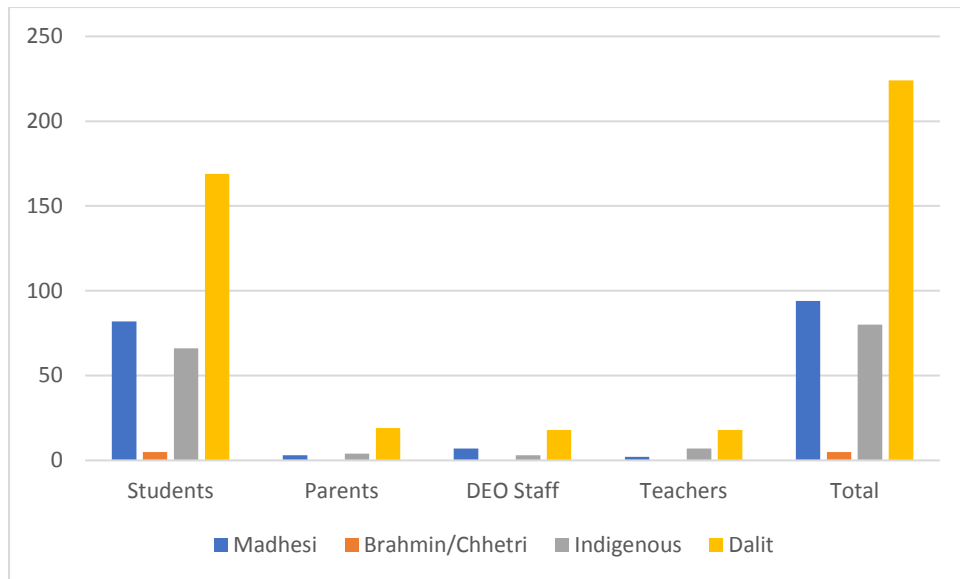


Figure 6. 7. Ethnic group with most cases of dropout

6.2.11 The Location (Rural or Urban) with Most Cases of Dropout

Five hundred and seventeen out of 567 chose a definite answer to the question about the location (rural or urban) with most cases of dropout. Fifty respondents chose 'don't know'. Large numbers of respondents (504 of 517) thought most cases of female students' dropout occurred in rural areas.

Table 6. 27 The Area in Which Dropout is Most Likely: Category-wise Responses

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
The Area in Which Dropout is Most Likely	Rural	421	26	29	28	504
	Urban	9	2	1	1	13
Total		430	28	30	29	517

6.3 Perception and Indicators of Female Student Dropout

Seven questions were asked (Q 306 to Q 312) to investigate people's perception about educating daughters and to find the socio-cultural indicators of female student dropout. Similarly, 11 questions were asked to examine the impact of the school

system, educational policy and curriculum. These parts of the survey included Likert type questions with five response levels: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and don't know.

Selecting an analytical approach appropriate to the Likert type survey responses for this research was problematic since some authorities regard Likert data where each response option has an adjectival label as only ordinal, while others argue that such data can be treated as if it was of a higher level of quality. It was decided that the responses would be treated as ordinal data to perform individual variable's descriptive statistical analysis. Such analysis included describing the frequency of the responses as bar charts, indication of central tendency presented in the form of the median or the mode, and variation summarised by the range across quartiles. Non-parametric analytical tests were then used: Mann-Whitney test and Kruskal-Wallis test. This section uses only two non-parametric statistical tests: Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to find if more than two groups had differences that was statistically significant. This test did not indicate which two groups differed significantly. To find that the Mann-Whitney test was carried out.

The table below presents the summary of the frequency counts of the responses. The discussion of the individual variable will follow the table.

Table 6. 28 Respondents' Perception about Female Students' Dropout

	Strongly agree 1	Agree 2	Don't know	Disagree 3	Strongly disagree 4
306. Certain religious/caste groups have most cases of drop out	39	182	171	130	45
307. It is ok for girls to dropout	13	14	24	140	376
308. Menstruating girls should stop going to school	15	27	22	160	343
309. Girls responsibility: looking after family/children, not education	10	10	8	109	430
310. Girls get married into another family, so no need of education	5	7	4	109	442
311. Formal employment is for boys: why should girls study?	8	8	5	126	420
312. It is students who can decide to drop out: school and parents have no role	29	61	49	205	223

6.3.1 Effect of Religion and Caste Group

Thirty-nine respondents strongly agreed with the statement that certain castes or religious groups had most cases of dropout. A largest number of respondents (182) agreed with this statement. Interestingly, a significant number of respondents (171) chose the neutral option 'don't know' and 130 of them disagreed and 45 strongly disagreed. The figure below presents this variation in bar chart and percentages.

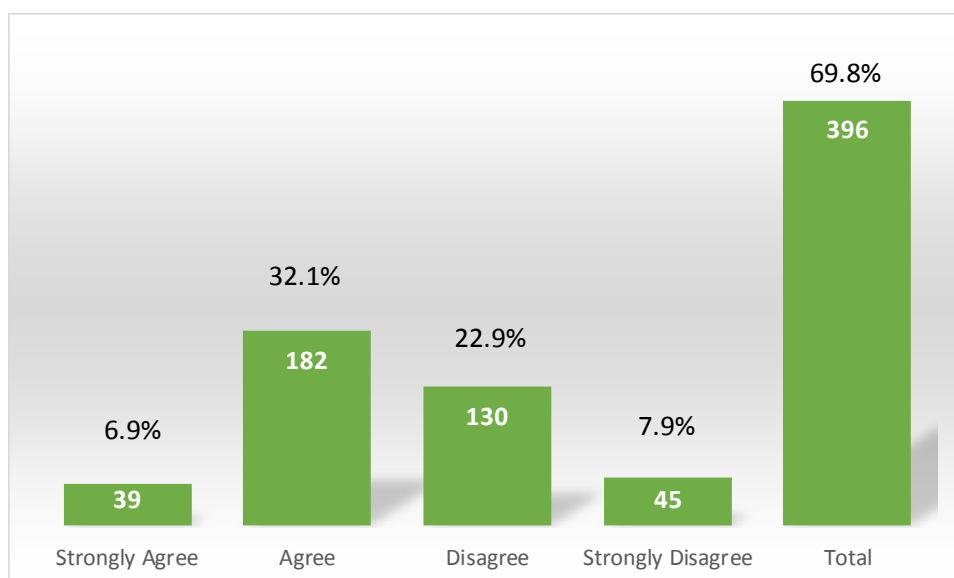


Figure 6. 8. Effect of religion and caste group

The frequency table and bar chart above present a range of variation in respondents' opinion. Category-wise responses in the following table (table 6.29) and the bar chart show that the largest number of respondents who disagreed were students. Only respondents from student category (45 of them) chose 'strongly disagree'. But the option 'disagree' was chosen by respondents of all categories: 116 students, three parents, three DEO staff and eight teachers. Among rest of the respondents 39 strongly agreed and 182 agreed with the statement.

Table 6. 29 Category-wise Responses on Effect of Religion and Caste Group

		Certain Religious/Caste Group Have Most Cases of Drop out				Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Respondents' Categories	Student	31	130	116	45	322
	Parents	3	14	3	0	20
	DEO Staff	3	20	3	0	26
	Teacher	2	18	8	0	28
Total		39	182	130	45	396

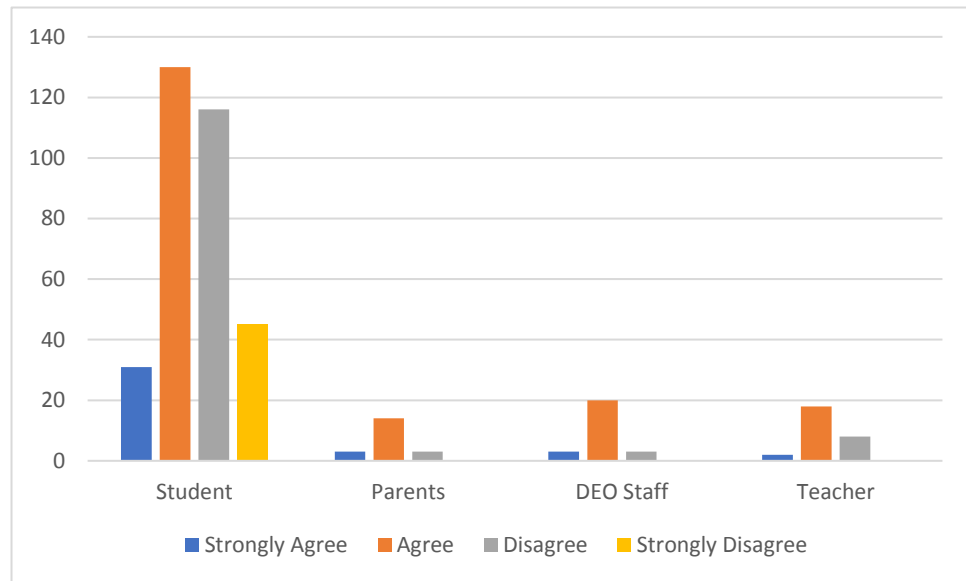


Figure 6. 9. Category-wise Responses on Effect of Religion and Caste Group

6.3.1a Further Statistical Test: Kruskal-Wallis

Each of the cells needed a minimum value of five to carry out the Chi-square (χ^2) test. The purpose of using this statistical test was to see the distribution of responses in four groups of respondents. However, as some of the cells had zero values in them, the chi-square test was not appropriate. The Kruskal-Wallis test, non-parametric alternative to the One-Way ANOVA, was used to compare responses of the four groups of respondents.

The test was carried out using an online calculator (mathcrackor.com). The ordinal response levels were entered in the calculator, which worked out the sum of ranks for each of the samples resulting in $R_1 = 67649$, $R_2 = 2746.5$, $R_3 = 3529.5$, $R_4 = 4681$. The assumption or the null hypothesis was that there was no difference in the distribution of responses. The alternative hypothesis was that the groups differed significantly in their responses. The following is the result of the test.

Rejection Region

Based on the response data, the significance level is $\alpha=0.05$, and the number of degrees of freedom is $df = 4 - 1 = 3$. Therefore, the rejection region for this Chi-Square test is $R = \{\chi^2: \chi^2 > 7.815\}$.

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \left(\frac{R_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{R_2^2}{n_2} + \dots + \frac{R_k^2}{n_k} \right) - 3(N+1)$$

$$= \frac{12}{396(396+1)} \left(\frac{67649^2}{322} + \frac{2746.5^2}{20} + \frac{3529.5^2}{26} + \frac{4681^2}{28} \right) - 3(396+1) = 18.926$$

Since it is observed that $\chi^2 = 18.926 > \chi^2_{\alpha} = 7.815$, it is then concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Student responses are compared with parents, DEO staff and teachers separately using the Mann-Whitney U test. Similar results are seen in the tests below. In all three comparisons, students' responses are significantly different from parents, DEO staff and Teachers at 0.05 level.

Table 6. 30 Mann-Whitney U: Students Vs Parents

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Student	322	175.14	56395.50
	Parents	20	112.88	2257.50
	Total	342		
Mann-Whitney U	2047.500			
Wilcoxon W	2257.500			
Z	-2.913			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.004			

Table 6. 31 Mann-Whitney U: Students Vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Student	322	175.14	57751.50
	DEO Staff	26	114.40	2974.50
	Total	348		
Mann-Whitney U	2326.500			
Wilcoxon W	2974.500			
Z	-3.382			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001			

Table 6. 32 Mann-Whitney U: Students Vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	322	178.60	57508.00
	Teachers	28	139.89	3917.00
	Total	350		
Mann-Whitney U	3511.000			
Wilcoxon W	3917.000			
Z	-2.073			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038			

6.3.2 Perception: Is it OK for Girls' to Dropout?

The statement that asserted that it was fine for girl students to drop out was included in the survey to observe respondents' level of agreement or disagreement. Five hundred and forty three out of 567 respondents chose a definite answer but 24 respondents chose 'don't know'. A large number of respondents showed their

disagreement as 376 of them strongly disagreed and 140 disagreed. However, 13 respondents strongly agreed and 14 agreed. The figure below presents the variation in responses.

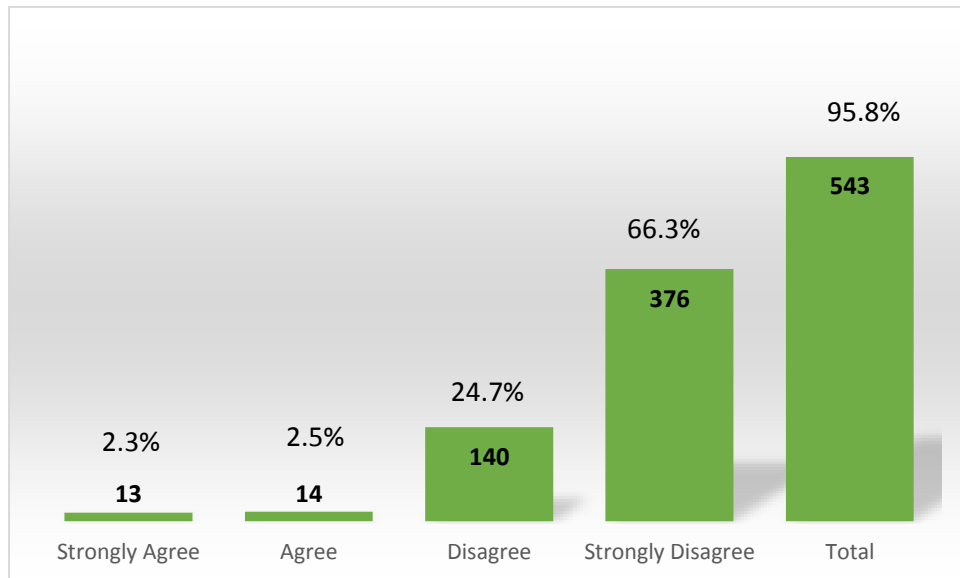


Figure 6. 10. Response to: It is OK for girls to dropout

The following table and bar chart present the responses from different categories of respondents. All those who agreed with the statement were students except for one respondent who was a member of DEO staff. It was surprising that a member of staff from a district education office thought that education for females was unimportant.

Table 6. 33 Category-wise Responses to: It is OK for Girls to Dropout

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
It is OK for Girls to Dropout	Strongly Agree	13	0	0	0	13
	Agree	13	0	1	0	14
	Disagree	105	18	12	5	140
	Strongly Disagree	325	10	17	24	376
	Total	456	28	30	29	543

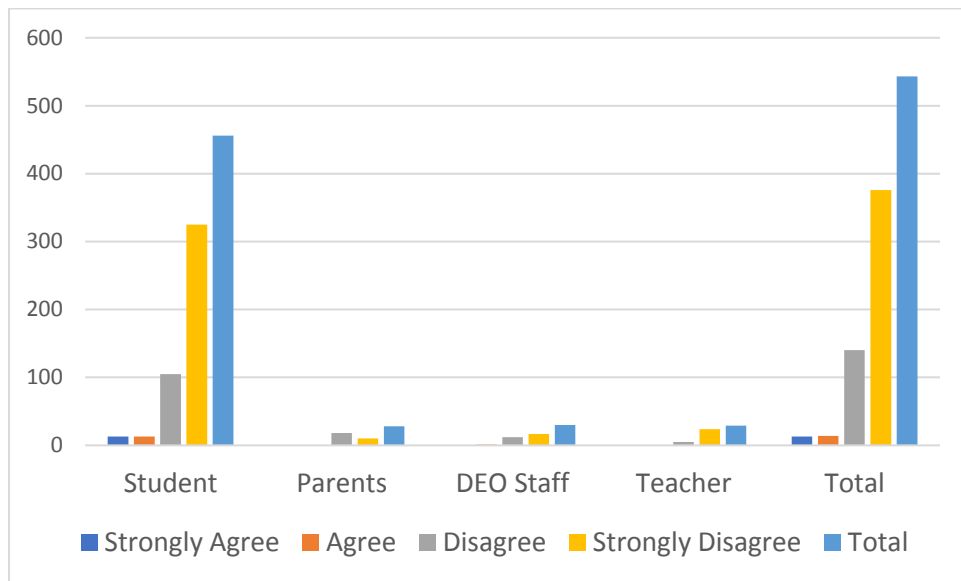


Figure 6. 11. Perception: It is Ok for girls to dropout

The distribution of responses to the statement was further explored to observe gender dimension. The result was that seven female students strongly agreed and seven female students agreed with the statement. Six male students strongly agreed and six agreed. Thus, more female students (14) than males (12) supported the statement that it was OK for girls to drop their education. The member of DEO staff who agreed was male. This showed that gender bias against females was not only in male members, it was also in females.

Table 6. 34 Gender-wise and Category-wise Responses

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	It is OK for Girls to Dropout	Strongly Agree	6	0	0	0	6
		Agree	6	0	1	0	7
		Disagree	46	9	12	3	70
		Strongly Disagree	135	10	17	16	178
	Total		193	19	30	19	261
Female	It is OK for Girls to Dropout	Strongly Agree	7	0		0	7
		Agree	7	0		0	7
		Disagree	59	9		2	70
		Strongly Disagree	190	0		8	198
	Total		263	9		10	282

6.3.2a Further Statistical Test

The analysis above shows that the responses to the given statement were not drastically divided. Only a small number of respondents (27 of 543) differed from the rest of the respondents. Therefore, it was decided that no further statistical tests were required.

6.3.3 Menstruation and Female Students' Dropout

Although menstruation is a natural physical condition, it has been a major socio-cultural issue in Nepal. In some parts of the country menstruating girls and women are considered impure and are not allowed to touch other family member's food or anybody else during the period. There is also an issue of menstruation being a cause of female students' dropout. Therefore, the statement – "menstruating girls should stop going to school" – was included in the survey to investigate the respondents' level of agreement or disagreement.

The figure below presents the summary of responses. Out of 567 respondents 545 chose a specific answer and 22 respondents chose 'don't know'. Three hundred and forty-three respondents chose 'strongly disagree' and 160 respondents chose 'disagree'. These respondents thought menstruation should not come in the way of female education. On the other hand, 15 respondents strongly agreed and 27 respondents agreed. Thus, 42 (15 strongly agreed+27 agreed) thought the girls who started menstruation should drop out of schools.

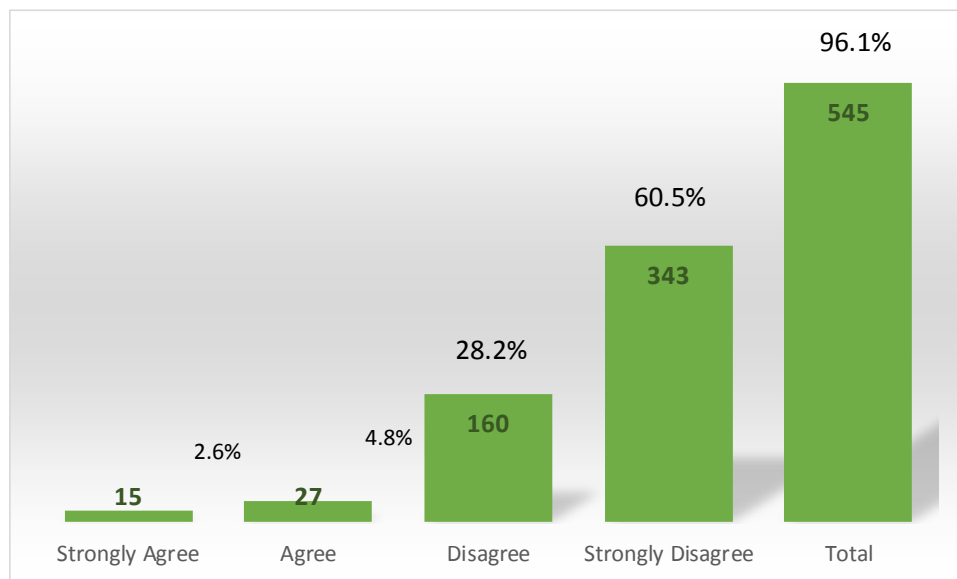


Figure 6. 12. Responses to 'menstruating girls should stop going to school'

A large majority of respondents did not agree that menstruating girls should drop their education. All those who agreed were students, parents and DEO staff. Thirteen students strongly agreed and 25 agreed. One parent and one member of DEO staff strongly agreed. Likewise, two more members of DEO staff agreed. Three members of DEO staff (one strongly agreed and two agreed) thought adolescent girls who started menstruation should end their schooling. What was surprising was that three members of DEO staff (one strongly agreed and two agreed) thought adolescent girls who started menstruation should end their schooling. The following table presents the distribution of responses among four participant categories.

Table 6. 35 Menstruation and Female Students Dropout

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Menstruating Girls Should Stop Going to School	Strongly Agree	13	1	1	0	15
	Agree	25	0	2	0	27
	Disagree	127	14	12	7	160
	Strongly Disagree	294	12	15	22	343
Total		459	27	30	29	545

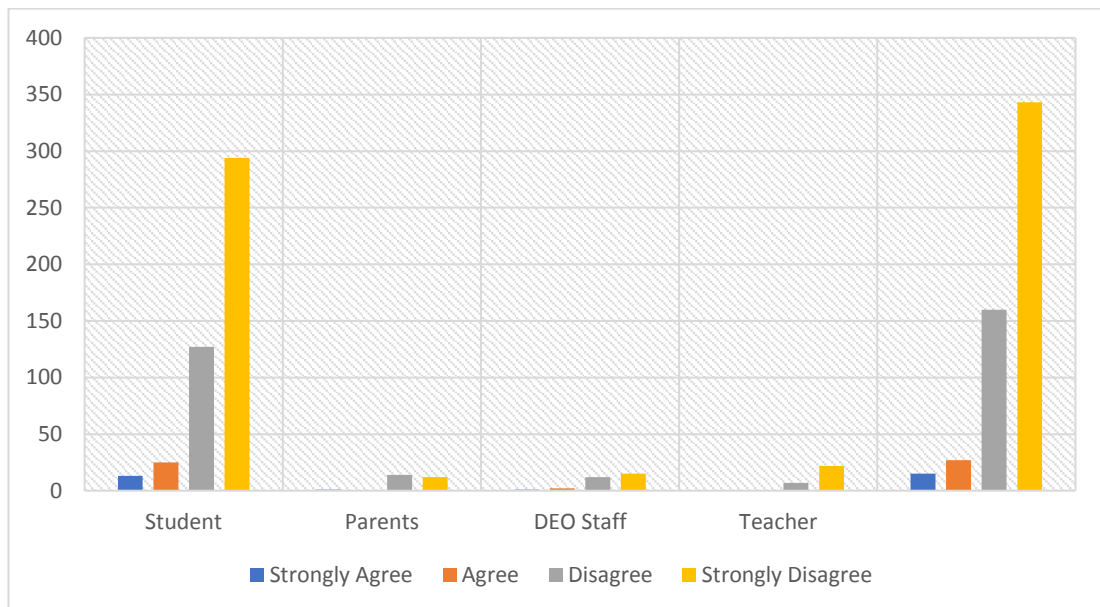


Figure 6. 13. Menstruation and female students' dropout

Gender distribution of those who strongly agreed and who agreed needed further investigation (see Table 6.36). Surprisingly, the respondents who thought female students' schooling should end with the start of menstruation were not only male but also female respondents. Seven male students strongly agreed and 21 agreed. Six female students strongly agreed and four agreed. Members of the DEO staff who supported the statement were three male DEO staff (one strongly agreed and two agreed). The parent who strongly agreed was female.

Table 6. 36 Male and Female Respondents: Menstruation and Female Students Dropout

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	Menstruating Girls Should Stop Going to School	Strongly Agree	7	0	1	0	8
		Agree	21	0	2	0	23
		Disagree	62	8	12	7	89
		Strongly Disagree	94	10	15	12	131
	Total		184	18	30	19	251
Female	Menstruating Girls Should Stop Going to School	Strongly Agree	6	1		0	7
		Agree	4	0		0	4
		Disagree	65	6		0	71
		Strongly Disagree	200	2		10	212
	Total		275	9		10	294

6.3.3a Further Statistical Test

The analysis above shows that there were few large differences between groups. Consequently, it was decided that no further statistical tests were required.

6.3.4 Female Students' Household Responsibility and Schooling

The statement that sought to explore participants' responses about household responsibility and girl students' schooling was: Girls Responsibility: Looking after Family/Children, not Education. A large majority of respondents rejected the notion conveyed by the statement – 430 strongly disagreed and 109 respondents disagreed. A total of ten respondents strongly agreed and the rest (ten respondents) agreed. The following bar chart (see Figure 6.14) presents the summary of the responses.

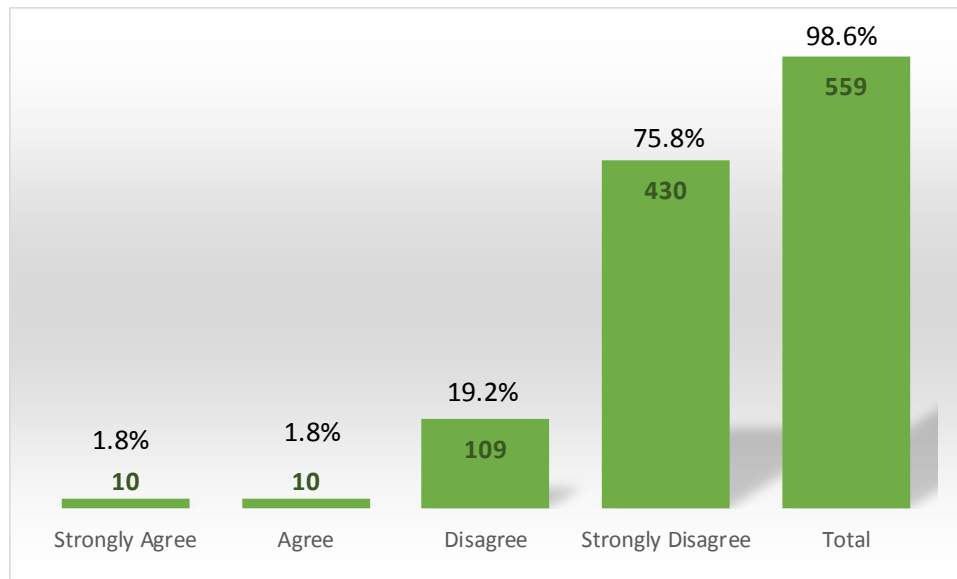


Figure 6. 14. Responses to Girl Students' Household Responsibilities and Education

Although there was a little difference among different groups of participants, a table that reflected the category-wise responses was generated (Table 6.37). Among those who strongly agreed with the statement were nine students and one parent. Likewise, among those who agreed were eight students, one parent and one DEO staff. The rest of the participants expressed their support for female students' education.

Table 6. 37 Responses to Girl Students' Household Responsibilities and Education

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Girls Responsibility: Looking after Family/Children, not Education	Strongly Agree	9	1	0	0	10
	Agree	8	1	1	0	10
	Disagree	87	10	8	4	109
	Strongly Disagree	368	16	21	25	430
Total		472	28	30	29	559

The following table adds gender details. Five male students, four female students and one female parent strongly agreed. Similarly, four male students, one male parent, one male DEO staff and four female students agreed. These respondents supported

a biased notion regarding female students' education. The surprising result was that eight female students (strongly agree+agree) and one female parent favoured the notion that females should be confined to household chores.

Table 6. 38 Responses of Males and Females of Different Categories of Respondents

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	Girls Responsibility: Looking after Family/Children, not Education	Strongly Agree	5	0	0	0	5
		Agree	4	1	1	0	6
		Disagree	39	5	8	4	56
		Strongly Disagree	148	13	21	15	197
	Total		196	19	30	19	264
Female	Girls Responsibility: Looking after Family/Children, not Education	Strongly Agree	4	1		0	5
		Agree	4	0		0	4
		Disagree	48	5		0	53
		Strongly Disagree	220	3		10	233
	Total		276	9		10	295

6.3.4a Further Statistical Test

The analysis above shows that the responses to the given statement were predominantly negative and only 20 (ten+ten) respondents answered positively. Therefore, it was decided that further statistical tests were not required.

6.3.5 Formal Employment and Female Students' Schooling

Issues of female education and employment needed investigation as the literature revealed a much smaller number of females than males in employment. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (2009), out of the two million employees in the 15+ age group, only 26.2% were women. Out of the total female labour force,

only 8.3% were paid. Therefore, the Likert statement - “Formal employment is for boys, why should girls study?” - was included in the survey to explore participants’ views about female education in relation to access to opportunities for formal employment.

Five hundred and sixty-two (99.1%) respondents chose a specific answer, and 74.1% respondents strongly disagreed and 22.2% disagreed. A very small number of respondents were in favour of the statement. Only 1.4% of respondents strongly agreed and 1.4% agreed. The responses reveal that most of the respondents (74.1%+22.2%) disagreed with the idea that formal employment was only for male members of society.

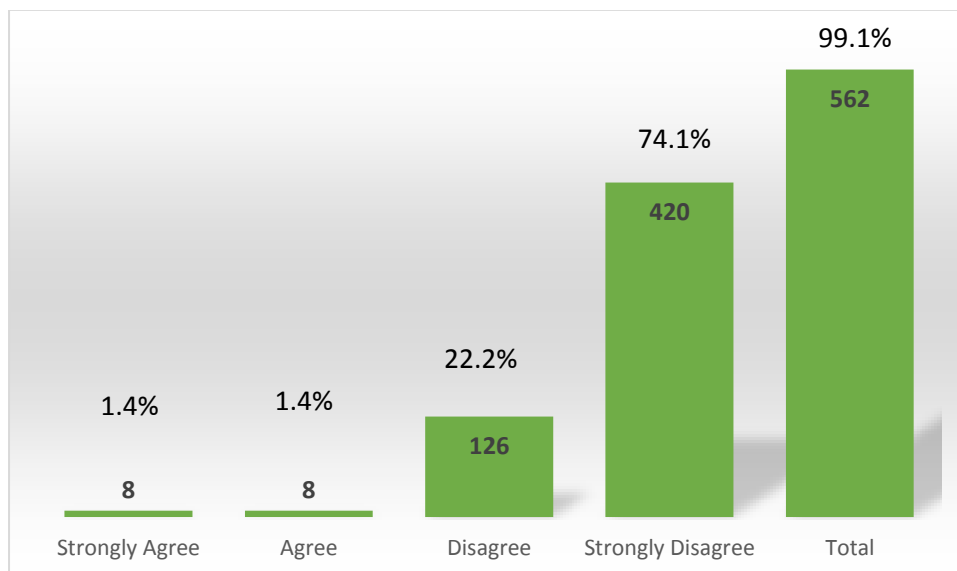


Figure 6. 15. Response to: Formal employment is for boys, why should girls study?

Figure 6.15 reveals that only 2.8% (1.4%+1.4%) of participants answered positively. All other respondents responded negatively, leaving 0.9% who chose ‘don’t know’. The following table provides the details of responses in terms of participant categories and gender.

All those who responded positively were students except for one parent and one member of DEO staff. Ten of them were male respondents (nine students and one member of DEO staff) and six were females (five students and one parent).

Table 6. 39 Formal Employment and Female Students' Schooling: Participant Category and Gender

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	Formal Employment is for Boys: Why Should Girls Study?	Strongly Agree	5	0	0	0	5
		Agree	4	0	1	0	5
		Disagree	37	6	9	3	55
		Strongly Disagree	151	13	20	16	200
	Total		197	19	30	19	265
Female	Formal Employment is for Boys: Why Should Girls Study?	Strongly Agree	2	1		0	3
		Agree	3	0		0	3
		Disagree	63	6		2	71
		Strongly Disagree	210	2		8	220
	Total		278	9		10	297

6.3.5a Further Statistical Test

The analysis above shows that the vast majority of participants denied the idea conveyed by the statement that the formal employment was suitable only for boys. So, no further statistical test was carried out.

6.3.6 Marriage and Female Students' Schooling

Marriage is an important family and social event in Nepal in which parents play a central role because most of the marriages are arranged (Ahearn 2004; Choe et al. 2004; Ghimire et al. 2006; Morgan and Niraula 1995 in Mainali et al, 2014). When

daughters marry, they leave their parents and go to live with their husbands' family, whereas sons do not go anywhere. Therefore, it was relevant to know what the respondents thought about the statement: 'Girls Get Married into Another Family, So No Need of Education.'

The figure 6.16 presents the summary of responses. Of 99.3% respondents who chose a specific response, 78% strongly disagreed and 19.2% disagreed. A much smaller number of respondents answered positively, i.e. 1.2% agreed and 0.9 % strongly agreed. This shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents rejected the idea that females needed no education as they left their parents after marriage.

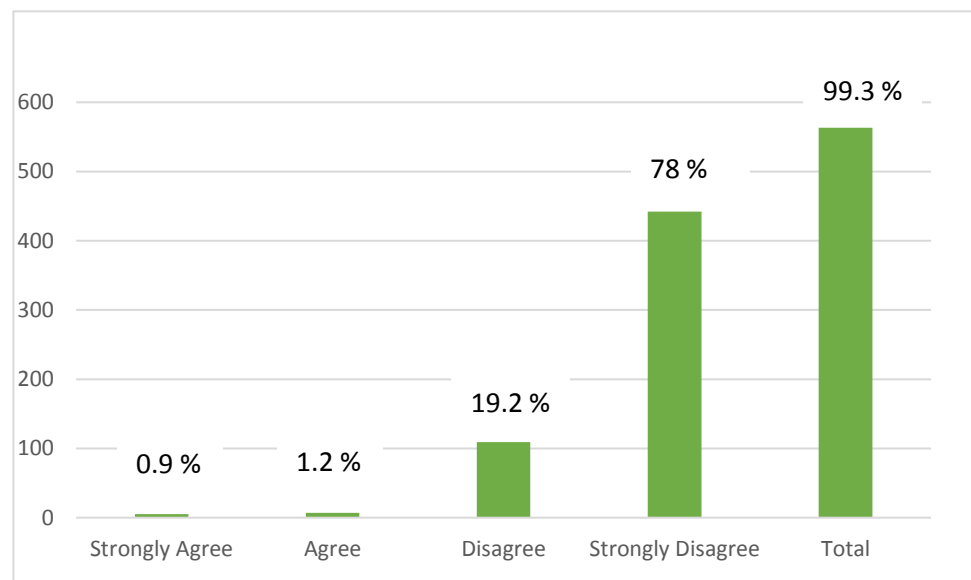


Figure 6. 16. Response to: Girls get married into another family, so no need of education

Table 6.40 below shows the distribution of responses by gender and participants' category. Those who strongly agreed with the statement were two male students, two female students and one female parent. Those who agreed were three male students, one male DEO staff and three female students. The rest of the participants strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

Table 6. 40 Marriage and Female Students' Schooling: Participant Category and Gender

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	Girls Get Married into Other Family, So No Need of Education	Strongly Agree	2	0	0	0	2
		Agree	3	0	1	0	4
		Disagree	37	6	7	4	54
		Strongly Disagree	157	13	22	15	207
	Total		199	19	30	19	267
Female	Girls Get Married into Other Family, So No Need of Education	Strongly Agree	2	1		0	3
		Agree	3	0		0	3
		Disagree	50	5		0	55
		Strongly Disagree	222	3		10	235
	Total		277	9		10	296

6.3.6a Further Statistical Tests

Analysis of the responses (see figure 6.16 and Table 6.40) shows that there was not much disagreement among respondents. The vast majority of them rejected the idea that female students did not need education because they marry into another family. Therefore, no further statistical test was carried out.

6.3.7 Students' Dropout: Who Decides?

A statement was included in the survey: 'It is Students Who Can Decide to Drop out: School and Parents Have No Role'. It was important to investigate what respondents thought about the process of dropout. Did they think that the decision to drop out was linked to school and parents, or not?

Of 91.4% of respondents who chose specific answer, 39.3% strongly disagreed and 36.2% disagreed. A very small number of respondents were in favour of the

statement. Of the remaining respondents, 5.1% strongly agreed and 10.8% agreed. The figure below (figure 6.17) presents the summary of responses.

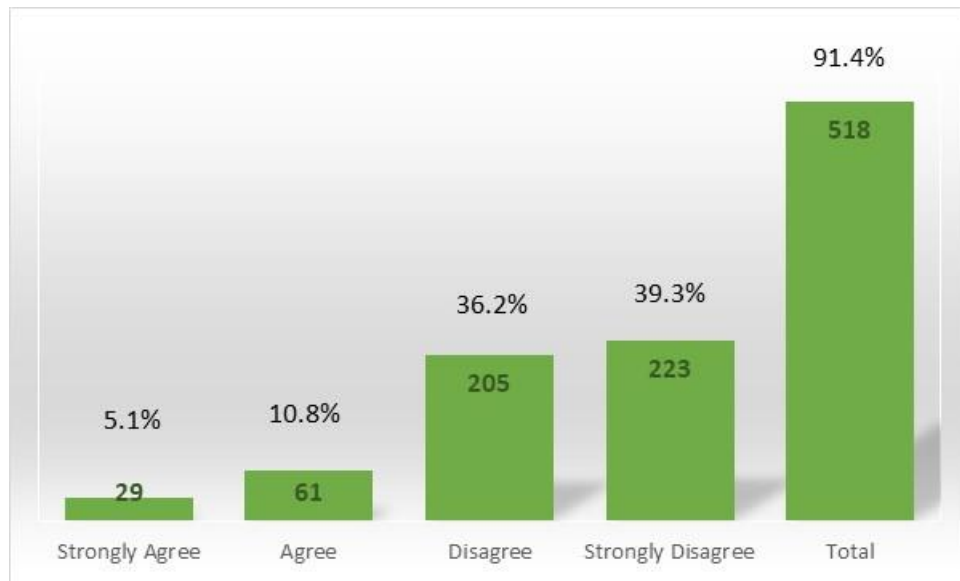


Figure 6. 17. Response to: It is Students Who Can Decide to Drop out; School and Parents Have No Role

The table below (Table 6.41) shows the distribution of responses by respondents' category and gender. Twenty-nine respondents strongly agreed with the statement: 28 students (18 male and ten female) and one female parent. Likewise, of 61 respondents who agreed were 58 were students (21 male and 38 female), there were two parents (one male and one female) and one male member of DEO staff. So, what was clear was that mostly the respondents who agreed with the statement were students. The rest of the respondents (except for 8.6% who chose 'don't know') disagreed with the idea that parents and school had nothing to do with students' dropout.

Table 6. 41 Students' Dropout: Are Students at Liberty to Decide?

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	It is Students Who Can Decide to Dropout: School and Parents Have No Role	Strongly Agree	18	0	0	0	18
		Agree	21	1	1	0	23
		Disagree	66	9	18	9	102
		Strongly Disagree	80	9	11	10	110
	Total		185	19	30	19	253
Female	It is Students Who Can Decide to Dropout: School and Parents Have No Role	Strongly Agree	10	1		0	11
		Agree	37	1		0	38
		Disagree	94	7		2	103
		Strongly Disagree	105	0		8	113
	Total		246	9		10	265

6.3.7a Further Statistical Analysis

The vast majority of participants thought that parents and school could do something to prevent student dropout. A very small number of participants (5.1%+10.8%) disagreed. This provided a clear result. So, no further analysis was carried out.

6.4 Effect of School System, Educational Policy, and Curriculum

The effect of factors linked to the school system on female students' retention was a major focus of this study. The effect of various factors such as educational policy, curriculum, methods of assessment, gender equality, quality of support system and availability of resources on female students' schooling were explored. Two questions – about class size and about the number of students who failed a grade promotion examination – were asked initially to investigate if these indicators had any link to female students' dropout. Then, eleven Likert type statements were provided to the respondents to assess their level of agreement or disagreement.

6.4.1 Question about Class Size

A question was asked - 'what is the average number of students in a grade in schools in your locality?' Five options for answers were provided: 20 or less, 21-40, 41-60, 61-80, 80+ and don't know. Four hundred and forty-seven respondents chose a specific option and 120 respondents chose 'don't know'.

Respondents chose all five options with the least number of respondents (3.9%) choosing '20 or less' and the highest number of respondents (23.5%) choosing '41-60', while 17.5% of respondents chose '61-80' and 16% chose 80+. Combining the number of respondents who chose 42-60, 61-80 and 80+ amounts to 57% of all respondents. A significant number of respondents believed that classes had more than 40 students. Figure below (Fig 6.18) presents the summary of the responses.

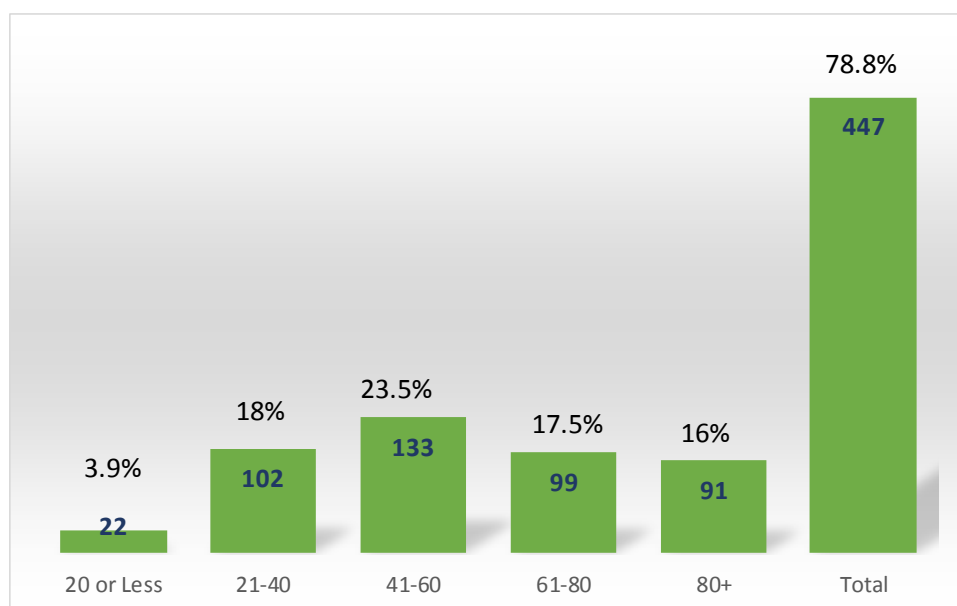


Figure 6. 18. Distribution of responses on average class size

The distribution of the responses among different categories of respondents shown in the table below (table 6.42 reveals that members of DEO staff disagreed with other respondents. The largest number of DEO staff (13) answered that an average class had 21 to 40 students, but the largest number of teachers (11), students (104) and parents (10) answered that an average class had 41 to 60 students.

Table 6. 42 Average number of students in a grade: Respondents' categories

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
What is the Average Number of Students in a Grade in Schools in Your Locality?	20 or Less	17	4	1	0	22
	21-40	79	3	13	7	102
	41-60	104	10	8	11	133
	61-80	83	4	4	8	99
	80+	84	0	4	3	91
Total		367	21	30	29	447

6.4.2 How Many Students Normally Fail the Examinations in a Grade?

This question was asked to find the grade promotion examinations' failure rate in a grade each year. Five options were provided: 'none, less than five, 6-10, 11-15, 15+ and don't know. Sixty percent respondents chose a specific answer whereas 40% chose 'don't know'. The highest number of respondents (21.3%) chose six to ten. The next highest number of respondents (16.8%) chose 15+. This shows that a significantly large number of respondents thought that six to 15 students failed examinations in a grade every year. Figure 6.19 presents the summary of responses.

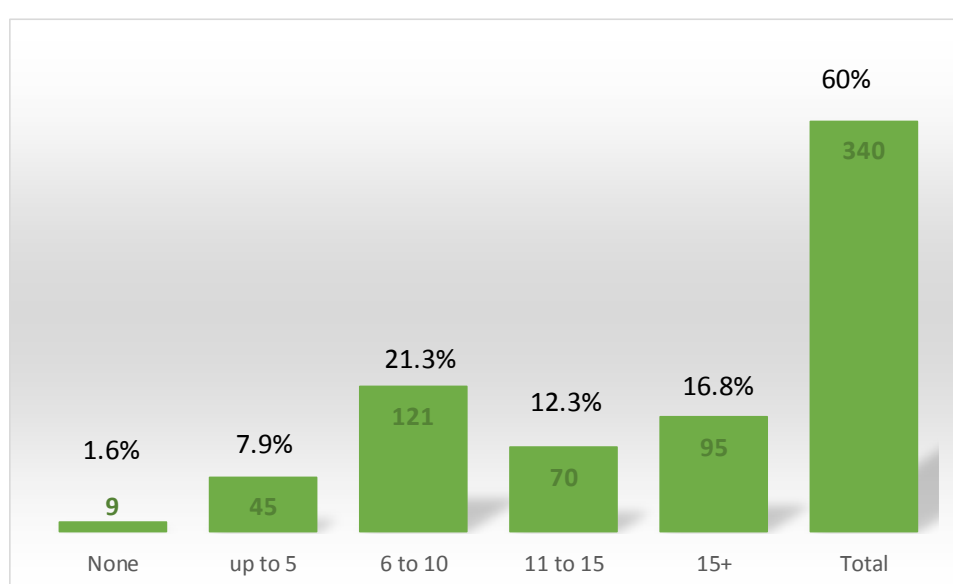


Figure 6. 19. Failure rate in a grade: respondents

Table 6.43 presents the region-wide distribution of responses. In the Terai the highest number of respondents (37) chose number of failures in a grade as '6-10'. The same answer (6-10) was chosen by the highest number of respondents in the hill region. But in the mountain the highest number of respondents (46) chose the 15+ option. This shows that there was an effect of region on the students' failure rate in a grade promotion examination.

Table 6. 43 Region-wide distribution of responses on failure rate

		Region of Residence			Total
		Terai	Hill	Mountain	
How Many Students Normally Fail the Examinations in a Grade?	None	1	2	6	9
	<5	18	12	15	45
	6-10	37	51	33	121
	11-15	17	38	15	70
	15+	30	19	46	95
Total		103	122	115	340

6.4.2a Further Statistical Test

The Mann Whitney U test was conducted to find if the difference in opinion of respondents from different regions was statistically significant. The tables below show that in all three Mann Whitney U Test results the difference was not significant at 0.05 level, although subtle differences were observed in the above table (Table 6.43). The probability of significant results of the test of first two groups (Terai and mountain) was $0.275 > 0.05$, the second two groups (hills and the mountain) was $0.094 > 0.05$, and the third groups (Terai and hills) was $0.786 > 0.05$.

Table 6. 44 Mann Whitney U Test: Responses from the Terai and Mountain

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
How Many Students Normally Fail the Examinations in a Grade?	Terai	103	104.81	10795.00
	Mountain	115	113.70	13076.00
	Total	218		
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		5439.000		
Z		-1.085		
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)		0.278		

Table 6. 45 Mann Whitney U Test: Responses from the Hill and Mountain

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
How Many Students Normally Fail the Examinations in a Grade?	Hill	122	112.04	13668.50
	Mountain	115	126.39	14534.50
	Total	225		
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		6165.500		
Z		-1.677		
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)		0.094		

Table 6. 46 Mann Whitney U Test: Responses from the Terai and Hills

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
How Many Students Normally Fail the Examinations in a Grade?	Terai	103	114.23	11765.50
	Hills	122	111.96	13659.50
	Total	225		
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		6156.500		
Z		-.272		
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)		0.786		

6.4.6 Are Female Students Weaker in Studies?

Is there any gender difference in study performance? Do the female students have weaker performance? Such questions needed to be addressed to see if the study performance had any gender effect and if this had any link to school retention. Thus, a statement ‘generally, girls are weaker in studies’ was included in survey.

The figure below shows that the responses were divided remarkably. The largest group of respondents (36.3%) chose disagree and the second largest group (33.9%) chose agree. The third group (16.8%) strongly disagreed. The smallest group of respondents (7.1%) strongly agreed. This means that a good number of respondents thought girls were normally weaker in studies. But the majority of respondents disagreed with that.

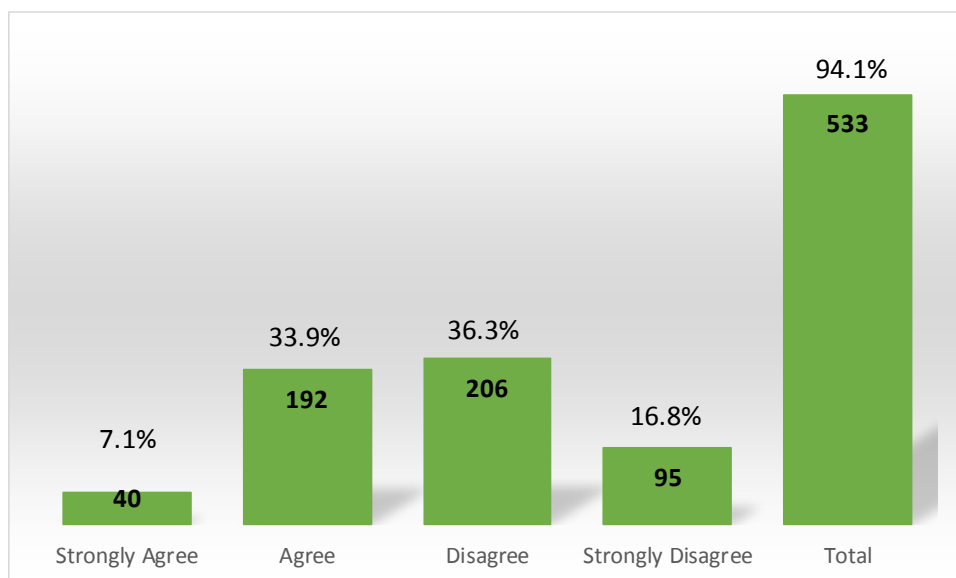


Figure 6. 20. Responses to: generally, girls are weaker in studies

The figure above (6.23) shows that a good number of respondents thought (192 and 40) girls were normally weaker in studies. But the majority of respondents (206 and 95) disagreed with that.

The table (6.57) below provides details of those respondents who agreed and disagreed with the statement. Twenty female respondents (19 students and one parent) strongly agreed and 108 females (101 students, six parents and one teacher) agreed that girl students were weaker in studies. Among the male respondents who supported this idea were 85 students (19 strongly agreed and 66 agreed), eight teachers (one strongly agreed and seven agreed), three DEO staff and eight parents.

Table 6. 47 Response to: Generally, Girls are Weaker in Studies

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male		Strongly Agree	19	0	0	1	20
		Agree	66	8	3	7	84
		Disagree	71	8	22	6	107
		Strongly Disagree	30	2	4	5	41
	Total		186	18	29	19	252
Female		Strongly Agree	19	1		0	20
		Agree	101	6		1	108
		Disagree	90	2		7	99
		Strongly Disagree	52	0		2	54
	Total		262	9		10	281

6.4.6a Further Statistical Tests

The analysis of figure 6.23 and table 6.57 indicated that further statistical tests were required to find if the differences among participants were statistically significant. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test and the Mann-Whitney tests were carried out.

The tests revealed statistically significant differences at various levels. The first test used was the Kruskal-Wallis to see if there was any significant difference among four categories of respondents. The result (table 6.58) shows that there was a significant difference ($p=0.014$).

Table 6. 48 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Respondents' Category

Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
Student	448	262.15
Parents	27	231.80
DEO Staff	29	335.67
Teacher	29	306.07
Total	533	
Test Statistics^{a,b}		
Chi-Square		10.667
Df		3
Asymp. Sig.		.014

The Kruskal-Wallis test did not show which groups differed. So, the Mann-Whitney tests were conducted. Of six tests, the comparison between the responses of students and members of DEO staff (table 6.59, $p=.009$), parents and members of DEO staff (table 6.60, $p=.001$) and parents and teachers (table 6.61, $p=.043$) produced significant results. These groups of respondents disagreed with each other. See Appendix 6.3 for the results of non-significant tests.

Table 6. 49 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Students Vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	448	235.03	105294.50
	DEO Staff	29	300.29	8708.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U				4718.500
Z				-2.616
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.009

Table 6. 50 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Parents Vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Parents	27	21.96	593.00
	DEO Staff	29	34.59	1003.00
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U				215.000
Z				-3.168
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.001

Table 6. 51 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Parents Vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Parents	27	24.24	654.50
	Teachers	29	32.47	941.50
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U				276.500
Z				-2.026
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.043

There was a disagreement also at regional level. The Kruskal-Wallis test conducted with the region-wide responses revealed significant differences (table 6.62, $p=.000$).

Table 6. 52 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Region-wide Responses

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank
Generally, Girls are Weaker in Studies	Terai	174	274.49
	Hill	182	292.20
	Mountain	177	233.73
	Total	533	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}			
Chi-Square			15.231
Df			2
Asymp. Sig.			.000

Three more Mann-Whitney tests were conducted to identify the groups that disagreed with each other. The tests revealed that there was a significant

disagreement between responses from the terai and the mountains (table 6.63, $p=.005$) and the responses from the hills and the mountains (table 6.64, $p=.000$).

Table 6. 53 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Terai vs Mountain

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Terai	174	190.27	33106.50
	Mountain	177	161.97	28669.50
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U		12916.500		
Z		-2.794		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.005		

Table 6. 54 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Hills Vs Mountain

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Hills	182	198.72	36167.00
	Mountain	177	160.75	28453.00
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U		12700.000		
Z		-3.671		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000		

Table 6. 55 Mann-Whitney Test Results: Terai vs Hills

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Terai	174	171.72	29879.00
	Hills	182	184.98	33667.00
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U		14654.000		
Z		-1.289		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.197		

6.4.3 Male Teachers and Gender Bias

Researchers have argued that the school environment (especially the teachers' attitudes, behaviour and teaching practices) have the most significant implications for female persistence and academic achievement (Odaga, 1995 in Chimombo, 2000). A statement 'male teachers pay more attention to boys in a classroom' was included to assess the effect of gender roles in schools.

Of 88.7% of respondents who provided a specific answer, 28.2% strongly disagreed and 46.4% disagreed with the statement. This shows that a vast majority of respondents (74.6%) did not think that male teachers had a gender bias. However, there were some respondents who thought that male teachers paid more attention to boys. Of these 3.2% strongly agreed and 10.9% agreed.

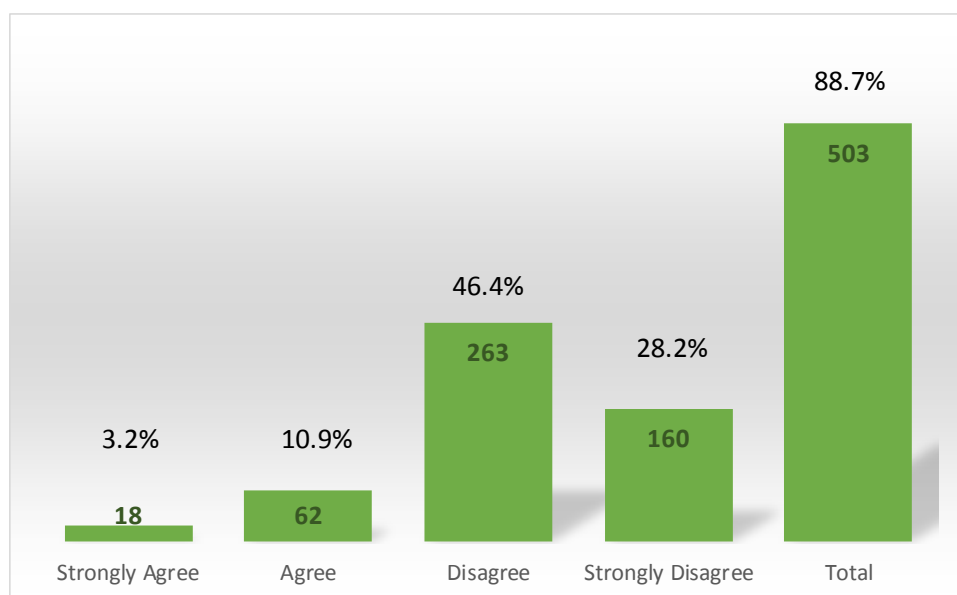


Figure 6. 21. Responses to: Male teachers pay more attention to boys

Although the figure 6.20 showed that the majority of respondents disagreed with the statement, it was important to look at details of the small group of respondents who agreed. The table below (table 6.47) shows those who showed strong agreement were all students: eight of them male and ten females. But those who chose 'agree' were from other categories except for teachers. Twenty-five male students, 32

female students, one male parent and four members of DEO staff agreed with statement. It was noteworthy that four members of DEO staff also believed that male teachers had gender bias.

Table 6. 56 Male Teachers and Gender Bias: Respondents' Categories

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male	Male Teachers' Pay More Attention to Boys in a Classroom	Strongly Agree	8	0	0	0	8
		Agree	25	1	4	0	30
		Disagree	92	14	22	3	131
		Strongly Disagree	59	3	2	16	80
	Total		184	18	28	19	249
Female	Male Teachers' Pay More Attention to Boys in a Classroom	Strongly Agree	10	0		0	10
		Agree	32	0		0	32
		Disagree	119	7		6	132
		Strongly Disagree	77	1		2	80
	Total		238	8		8	254

6.4.3a Further Statistical Test

Only 14.1% (Strongly agree+agree) were in favour of the statement, so the statement was heavily rejected. Therefore, no further statistical test was carried out.

6.4.4 Government's Funding and a Girl-friendly School Environment

Several previous studies (see 2.5) have linked the government spending with education and school retention. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) argue that in several countries, governments are unable to pay teachers' salaries regularly, and funds for running schools are disbursed intermittently. Therefore, a statement was included: "schools cannot have a girl-friendly environment because of lack of the government's funding".

The figure below (6.21) reveals that the respondents' opinions were divided between positive and negative responses, although more respondents answered positively. Out of 84.1% respondents who chose a definite answer, 10.4% of them strongly agreed and 39.3% agreed. But 23.1% of respondents disagreed and 11.3% strongly disagreed. Thus, 49.7% respondents (strongly agree+agree) thought that a lack of sufficient government funding affected the school environment negatively. However, 34.4% (strongly disagree+disagree) of respondents disagreed with that.

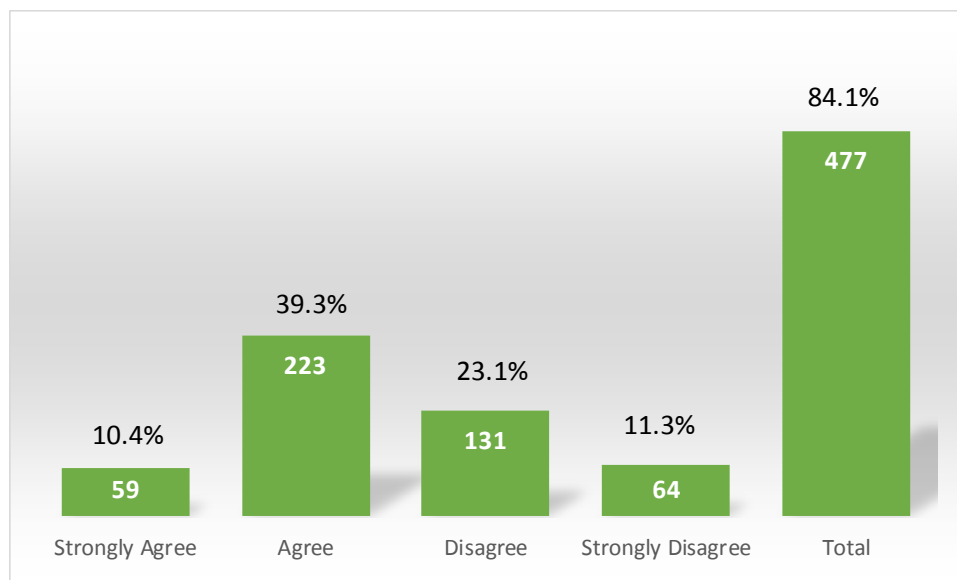


Figure 6. 22. Responses to: schools cannot have a girl-friendly environment because of lack of government funding

Table 6.48 below provides an overview of responses by participants' category. The highest number of respondents in each category (171 students, 20 parents, 18 DEO staff and 14 teachers) chose 'agree'. But the second highest number of respondents (111 students, eight DEO staff, six parents and six teachers) chose 'disagree'. Thus, all categories of respondents were both agreeing and disagreeing.

Table 6. 57 Government Funding and School Environment

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Schools Cannot Have a Girl Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government Funding	Strongly Agree	54	0	2	3	59
	Agree	171	20	18	14	223
	Disagree	111	6	8	6	131
	Strongly Disagree	55	1	2	6	64
Total		391	27	30	29	477

6.4.4a Further Statistical Tests

It was clear from table 6.48 and figure 6.21 that there was a disagreement among participants regarding government funding of public schools and a girl-friendly school environment. Further statistical tests were carried out to find if the differences were statistically significant. The Mann-Whitney Test was used for the responses from two groups and the Kruskal Wallis test was used for the responses from more than two groups.

The result of the Kruskal-Wallis test shows that there were no statistically significant differences among different categories of respondents (table 6.49) ($p= 0.786$). The results of the Mann-Whitney test for gender (table 6.49) also had similar results ($p=0.870$). There was no significant difference in views between male and female respondents.

Table 6. 58 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Respondents' Categories

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
Schools Cannot Have Girl Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government Funding	Student	391	240.39
	Parents	27	220.50
	DEO Staff	30	227.10
	Teacher	29	249.83
	Total	477	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	1.064		
df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.786		

Table 6. 59 Mann-Whitney Test: Male Vs Female

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girl Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government Funding	Male	240	239.96	57591.00
	Female	237	238.03	56412.00
	Total	477		
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U	28209.000			
Z	-.164			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.870			

The Kruskal-Wallis test carried out to see if there was a significant difference in responses at regional level. The result (table 6.50) was not statistically significant ($p=0.545$). Then the test was carried out at district level. The result below (table 6.51) shows that the difference in responses was significant ($p= 0.027$). This finding needed further detail as Kruskal-Wallis test results revealed that at least two groups disagreed significantly but did not tell which two groups. A series of post hoc Mann Whitney tests were carried out pairing one district group responses with other groups one at a time.

Table 6. 60 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Region-wide Responses

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank
Schools Cannot Have Girl Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government Funding	Terai	153	245.82
	Hill	162	230.31
	Mountain	162	241.24
	Total	477	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	1.215		
df	2		
Asymp. Sig.	.545		

Table 6. 61 Kruskal-Wallis Test: District-wide Responses

	District of Survey	N	Mean Rank
Schools Cannot Have a Girl Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government Funding	Rautahat	80	219.38
	Jhapa	73	274.81
	Kathmandu	85	217.76
	Sankhuwasabha	82	225.07
	Jumla	80	257.81
	Rolpa	77	244.17
	Total	477	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	12.604		
df	5		
Asymp. Sig.	.027		

6.4.4b Further Tests: Which Groups Had Significant Difference?

Based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis shown in the above table, 15 Mann Whitney tests were carried out to see which group of responses differed significantly. Three pairs of groups had significant differences in response. These groups were:

(J)Rautahat and Jhapa ($p=.01$), Jhapa and Kathmandu ($p=.005$), Jhapa and Sankhuwasabha($p=.014$). It is noteworthy that a respondent group from a location in eastern plains (Jhapa) differed significantly with a location from the mountain (Sankhuwasabha) and a location from the hills (Kathmandu).

Table 6. 62 Mann Whitney Test Results: District-wide Responses

Locations	Test Results	Locations	Test Results
Rautahat Jhapa	$p= 0.01$	Rautahat Kathmandu	$p= .989$
Rautahat Sankhuwasabha	$p= .754$	Rautahat Jumla	$p= .071$
Rautahat Rolpa	$p=.221$	Jhapa Kathmandu	$p= .005$
Jhapa Sankhuwasabha	$p= .014$	Jhapa Jumla	$p=.477$
Jhapa Rolpa	$p= .122$	Kathmandu Sankhuwasabha	$p= .698$
Kathmandu Jumla	$p= 0.052$	Kathmandu Rolpa	$p=.171$
Sankhuwasabha Jumla	$P=.109$	Sankhuwasabha Rolpa	$p=.337$
Rolpa Jumla	$p= .483$		

The tables below (6.53, 6.54, 6.55) show the significant results of the Mann-Whitney tests. The rest of the tables with non-significant results are in appendices (see Appendix 6.1)

Table 6. 63 Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Rautahat	80	68.72	5498.00
	Jhapa	73	86.07	6283.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2258.000		
Z		-2.576		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.01		

Table 6. 64 Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Jhapa	73	89.85	6559.00
	Kathmandu	85	70.61	6002.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2347.000		
Z		-2.835		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.005		

Table 6. 65 Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Jhapa	73	86.71	6330.00
	Sankhuwasabha	82	70.24	5760.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2357.000		
Z		-2.451		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.014		

6.4.5 Lack of Separate Gender Toilets and Female Students' Schooling

Sanitation facilities such as separate gender toilets and its effect on female students' school retention has been an issue of concern in the context of Nepal and countries with a similar socio-economic situation. The studies have found that attendance and participation in schools during menstruation is problematic for females (Boxx, 2014). This study aimed to investigate respondents' views regarding the issue of toilet facilities in schools. Therefore, a statement 'lack of separate toilets for girls and boys in school causes difficulty to girls' was included in the survey.

The responses (figure 6.22) show that the highest number of respondents (38.4%) chose agree and the second highest number of respondents chose disagree. The responses were divided between agreeing and disagreeing. Combining positive responses (agree and strongly agree) 56.9% of respondents agreed that lack of separate toilets in schools caused girls students a difficulty in continuing their studies. But 37.1 % answered negatively (disagree+ strongly disagree).

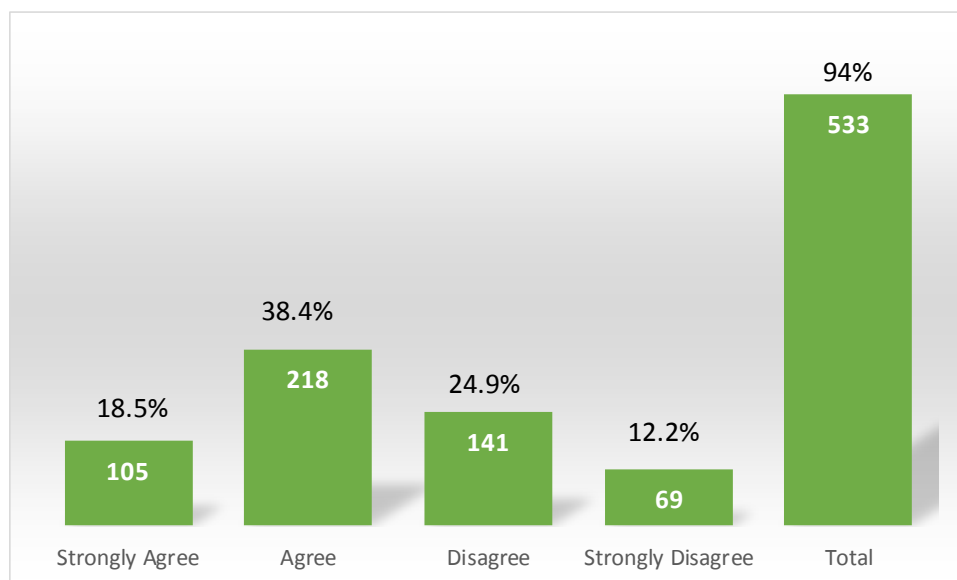


Figure 6. 23. Responses to: lack of separate toilets for girls and boys in school causes difficulty to girls

Table 6.56 below provides details of response distribution among different categories of respondents. The table shows that the largest number of respondents

in each category (181 students, 12 parents, 13 DEO staff and 12 teachers) agreed with the statement, while the second largest number in each category (109 students, ten parents, 11 DEO staff, and 11 teachers) disagreed. The responses of the parents, members of DEO staff and teachers were divided with similar numbers between the positive and the negative (parents: 15 positive, 12 negative; DEO staff: 16 positive, 14 negative; teachers: 16 positive, 13 negative). Only the students' responses were different. Therefore, it was important to see if the disagreement among the participants was statistically significant.

Table 6. 66 Responses Regarding Lack of Separate Sex Toilets

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Lack of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys in Schools Causes Difficulty to Girls	Strongly Agree	95	3	3	4	105
	Agree	181	12	13	12	218
	Disagree	109	10	11	11	141
	Strongly Disagree	62	2	3	2	69
Total		447	27	30	29	533

6.4.5a Further Statistical Tests

Further statistical tests were conducted to see if the disagreement was statistically significant. The Kruskal-Wallis and the Mann Whitney U tests were used. The tests were carried out in various groups such as male/female, district locations, participant categories and ecological zones. None of the test results produced statistically significant values (see appendix page 6.2 for the tables with the test statistics).

6.4.7 Do Schools Provide Additional Support to Low Performers?

Researchers have linked poor academic achievement to dropping out (Kishor and Shaji, 2012). It was important to know about additional support to low performing pupils in Nepalese high schools. So, a statement included in the survey was: school does not provide extra teaching support for low performing students.

The summary of responses below (figure 6.24) show that 55.2% (strongly agree+agree) thought the schools did not provide additional support to low performers. But 37.9% (strongly disagree+ disagree) respondents disagreed with it. The largest number of respondents (43.4%) agreed with the statement and the second largest number (27.5%) disagreed with it.

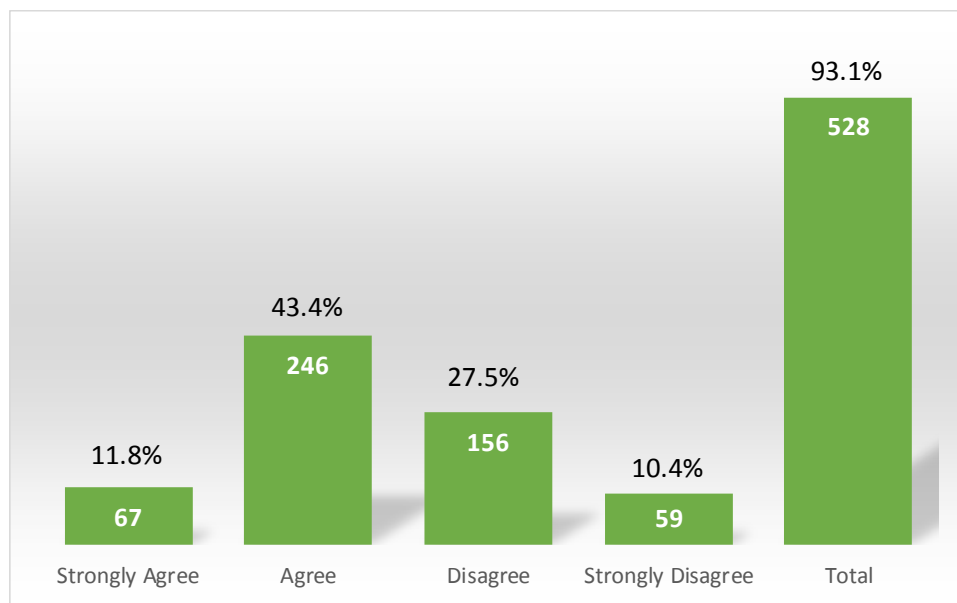


Figure 6. 24. Response: school does not provide extra teaching support for low performing students.

Such disagreement among participants needed further analysis. The table below (table 6.66) presents the distribution of responses by participant categories. The largest number of each category of respondents agreed that the schools did not provide additional support to low achievers. An interesting finding was that 22 members of DEO staff and 12 teachers thought schools lacked such support. Of four groups of participants, the teachers' group displayed disagreement among themselves as 15 of them had a positive response and 13 negative.

Table 6. 67 Response to: School Does not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Strongly Agree	61	2	1	3	67
	Agree	196	16	22	12	246
	Disagree	131	8	5	12	156
	Strongly Disagree	57	1	0	1	59
Total		445	27	28	28	528

6.4.7a Further Statistical Tests

Statistical tests with different groups of respondents were conducted but none of the tests produced statistically significant results. Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted with participant categories ($p=.360$), regions of residence ($p=.304$), district locations ($p=.064$), and Mann Whitney test was carried out for male and female participants ($p=.174$) (see appendix 6.4 for test statistics). None of these tests had significant results.

6.4.8 Can Girls Share their Personal Problems with Teachers?

In the context of a male- centred socio-cultural and educational environment, the way female students deal with their personal problems at schools is an important issue for investigation. According to the report produced by the Ministry of Education Nepal, there are 13.8% of female teachers in community schools (MOE, 2015). The questions is: can female students share their personal problems with teachers at all? In the absence of female teachers in school, can they approach male teachers and share their problems? Therefore, a statement in the survey was: girls cannot share their personal problems with teachers.

Figure 6.25 presents the summary of responses. A large majority of respondents (75%) thought that female students could not share their personal problems with

teachers. This included those who strongly agreed with the statement (16.8%) and those who agreed (58.2%). Only 19.6% of respondents answered negatively. This included those who strongly disagreed (3.9%) and those who disagreed (15.7%). In total 94.5% respondents chose specific answers and 5.5% chose 'don't know'.

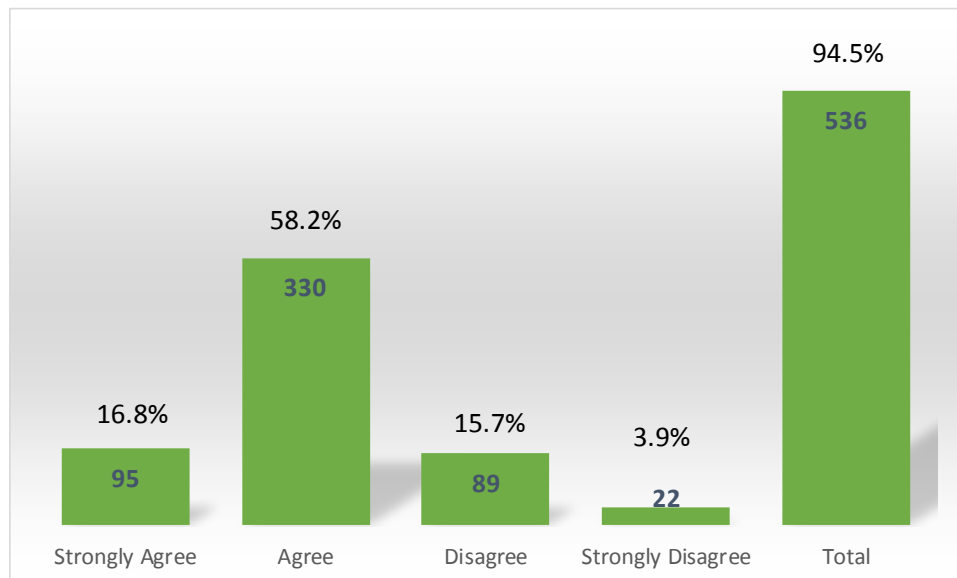


Figure 6. 25. Response to: girls cannot share their personal problems with teachers

The table below (Table 6.67) presents the distribution of responses among different categories of respondents. The largest number of respondents in each category chose agree. Only 22 students chose 'strongly disagree', of whom 12 were male and ten females. Three male members of DEO staff, one male parent and one female parent also disagreed. None of the teachers chose 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree'. Twenty- seven male students and 57 female students disagreed. The rest of the respondents who chose a specific answer agreed that it was difficult for female students to share their personal problems with teachers.

Table 6. 68 Girls Cannot Share Their Personal Problems with Teachers

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male		Strongly Agree	33	1	4	5	43
		Agree	106	17	23	14	160
		Disagree	27	1	3	0	31
		Strongly Disagree	12	0	0	0	12
	Total		178	19	30	19	246
Female		Strongly Agree	49	1		2	52
		Agree	156	6		8	170
		Disagree	57	1		0	58
		Strongly Disagree	10	0		0	10
	Total		272	8		10	290

6.4.8a Further Statistical Test

Although 75% of respondents gave positive answers, some distinctive features such as 'strongly disagree' was chosen only by students and none of the teachers chose 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. So, the Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to find if any groups had statistically significant differences. The test did not yield a statistically significant result ($p=.078$) (appendix 6.5). The Mann-Whitney tests were also carried out to find if any of these groups had significant differences. Interestingly, students and teachers ($p=.015$, table 6.68) and parents and teachers ($p=.038$, table 6.69) had a significant result. The other groups of respondents - students and parents ($p=.599$), students and DEO staff ($p=.415$), parents and DEO staff ($p=.771$) – did not have significant results (appendix 6.5)

Table 6. 69 Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	Students	450	243.45	109552.00
	Teachers	29	186.48	5408.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				4973.000
Z				-2.433
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.015

Table 6. 70 Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	Parents	27	31.74	857.00
	Teachers	29	25.48	739.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				304.000
Z				-2.077
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.038

6.4.9 Are the Text books too Challenging?

Studies show that the quality of textbooks, teaching methods and the assessment system all impact girls' school retention (Huxley, 2008). How did the respondents feel about the existing textbooks? To know this, a statement was included in the survey: the textbooks are too challenging for students.

A total of 86.4% of respondents chose a specific response, whereas 13.6% chose 'don't know'. The figure below (figure 6.26) reveals that the majority of respondents disagreed with the statement as 51.1% chose 'disagree' and 7.9% chose 'strongly disagree'. But the second largest number of respondents (23.3%) chose 'agree'. This suggests that respondents disagreed.

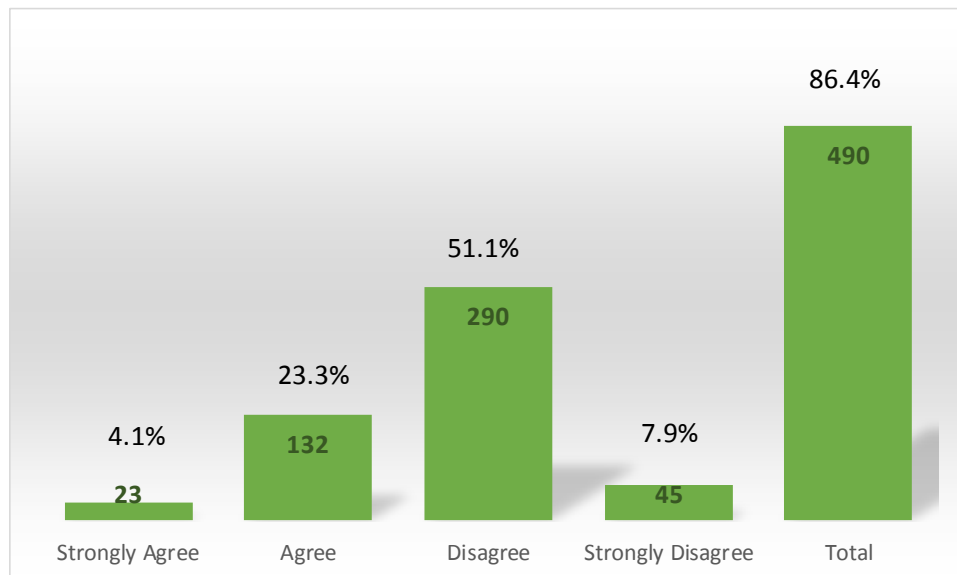


Figure 6. 26. Textbooks are too challenging for students

The responses were further compared among different categories of respondents (table 6.70). One member of DEO staff strongly agreed and one agreed that the textbooks were too challenging for students. But the rest of the DEO staff (26) disagreed. Six teachers also agreed with the statement. But 20 teachers disagreed and two teachers strongly disagreed. Ten parents gave a positive response, whereas 13 chose negative response. Students were divided in their opinion like other respondents. One hundred and thirty-seven chose positive responses but 274 chose negative responses.

Table 6. 71 Textbooks are too Challenging for Students: Participants' Responses

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Strongly Agree	21	1	1	0	23
	Agree	116	9	1	6	132
	Disagree	234	12	24	20	290
	Strongly Disagree	40	1	2	2	45
Total		411	23	28	28	490

6.4.9a Further Statistical Test

The differences among participants' responses were further analysed. The Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to see if the disagreement among different categories of respondents was statistically significant. The results of the test show that the disagreement was not statistically significant ($p=0.07$). The Mann-Whitney tests were also carried out to see any of the groups had significant differences. Two pairs – students/ DEO staff ($p=.034$, table 6.71), and parents/DEO staff ($p=.008$, table 6.72) – had significant results. Other pairs – students/parents ($p=.278$), students/teachers ($p=.312$), parents/teachers ($p=.092$) and DEO staff/teachers ($p=.262$) – did not have significant results (appendix 6.6).

Table 6. 72 Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Text books are too challenging for students	Students	411	217.05	89206.50
	DEO Staff	28	263.34	7373.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		4540.500		
Z		-2.119		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.034		

Table 6. 73 Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Text books are too challenging for students	Parents	23	21.09	485.00
	DEO Staff	28	30.04	841.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				209.000
Z				-2.672
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.008

6.4.10 Schools and Provision of Separate Teaching to Students with Different Abilities

The Likert statement about teaching strategies for students with different abilities included in the survey was: schools do not provide separate teaching to students with different abilities. The intention was to investigate whether differentiated child-friendly teaching and support system was in place. The figure below (Figure 6.27) summarises participants responses to the statement.

A total of 93.7% of respondents provided specific answers and 6.3% of them chose 'don't know'. Sixty-nine-point five percent of respondents (agree+disagree) provided a positive response. This suggests that the majority of respondents thought there was lack of a child-friendly teaching method and support system in schools. But 24.1% (disagree+strongly disagree) of respondents did not agree with the statement. Thus, there was a disagreement among participants, as the largest number of respondents (55.7%) chose 'agree' and the second largest number (17.6%) chose 'disagree'.

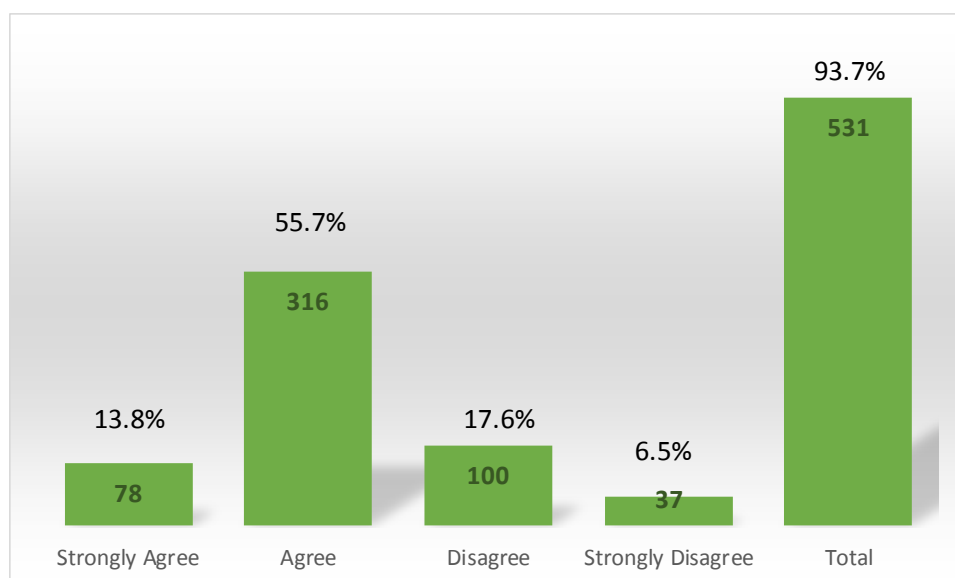


Figure 6. 27. Schools do not provide separate teaching to students with different abilities

Table 6.73 below presents the category-wise distribution of responses. Most of the members of DEO staff (29) and most of the teachers (27) agreed that schools lacked provision of separate teaching to different ability groups. Only one member of DEO staff and two teachers disagreed with the statement. No parents, teachers and members of DEO staff strongly disagreed with the statement. Thirty-seven students strongly disagreed and 90 of them disagreed although a huge majority of students (320) gave a positive response.

Table 6. 74 Schools Does not Provide Separate Teachings to Students with Different Abilities: Respondents' Categories

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Schools Does not Provide Separate Teaching to Students with Different Abilities	Strongly Agree	69	1	5	3	78
	Agree	251	17	24	24	316
	Disagree	90	7	1	2	100
	Strongly Disagree	37	0	0	0	37
Total		447	25	30	29	531

6.4.10a Further Statistical Tests

The disagreement among the participants was further investigated with the Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney statistical tests. The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that the difference was significant ($p=.042$). Table 6.74 presents the test statistics.

Table 6. 75 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Category

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Student	447	270.86
	Parents	25	286.86
	DEO Staff	30	210.60
	Teacher	29	230.47
	Total	531	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	8.185		
Df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.042		

Mann-Whitney tests were carried out to identify the groups that had significant differences. Each group was paired with every other group for the test. It was found that two pairs (students and DEO staff with $p=.034$, parents and DEO Staff with $p=.008$) had significant results. This shows that members of DEO staff disagreed with students and parents. Table 6.75 and Table 6.76 present the test results.

Table 6. 76 Mann-Whitney Test: Students vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Student	411	217.05	89206.50
	DEO Staff	28	263.34	7373.50
	Total	439		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	4540.500			
Z	-2.119			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.034			

Table 6. 77 Mann-Whitney Test: Parents Vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Parents	23	21.09	485.00
	DEO Staff	28	30.04	841.00
	Total	51		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	209.000			
Z	-2.672			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008			

6.4.11 Females at Risk of Dropout: Is School Concerned?

A statement was included to investigate school-parent communication with regard to the female students at risk of dropping out from school: school does not invite parents of girls at risk of dropout to discuss the issue. Of 567 respondents, 87.2% of them chose specific response, whereas 12.8% chose 'don't know'.

Sixty percent (agree+strongly agree) of respondents (figure 6.27) agreed that schools did not communicate with the parents of female students at risk of dropping out. On the other hand, 20.7% (disagree+strongly disagree) of them did not agree with the statement. The largest number of respondents (45.7%) chose agree, but the second largest number of respondents (20.1%) chose disagree. This shows that there was disagreement among respondents.

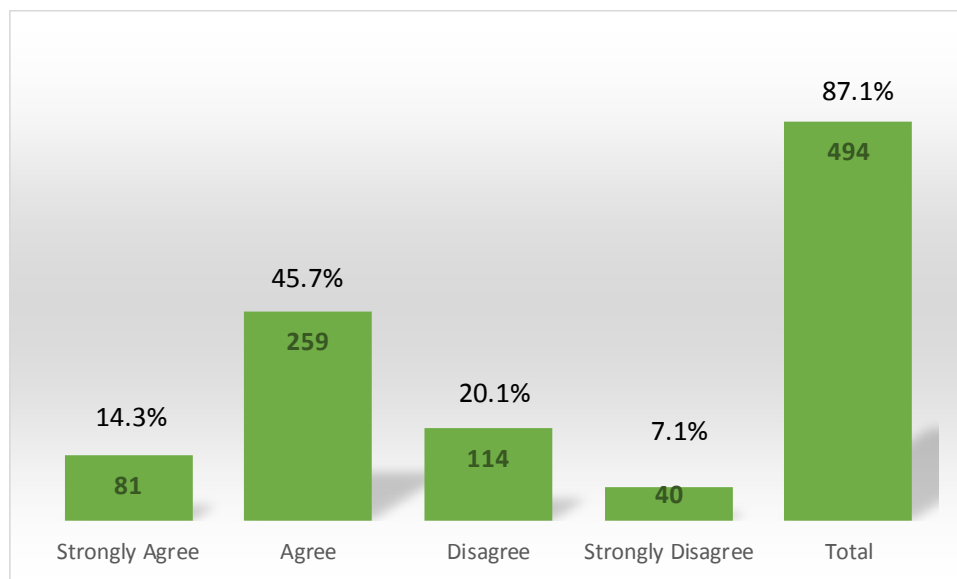


Figure 6. 28. School does not invite parents of girls at risk of dropout to discuss the issue

The table below (table 6.77) shows the distribution of responses among different categories of respondents. There was some degree of disagreement among respondents in each category. The largest number of respondents in each category (201 students, 21 parents, 20 DEO staff, 17 teachers) agreed with the statement. It was noteworthy that 26 members of DEO staff and 19 teachers chose a positive response. Ten teachers and four members of DEO staff chose a negative response. Twenty-two parents chose a positive response and five chose a negative. Likewise, 273 students chose a positive response but 135 of them chose a negative.

Table 6. 78 Response to: School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue	Strongly Agree	72	1	6	2	81
	Agree	201	21	20	17	259
	Disagree	97	5	4	8	114
	Strongly Disagree	38	0	0	2	40
Total		408	27	30	29	494

6.4.11a Further Statistical Tests

The Kruskal-Wallis test was carried out to see if the groups of respondents showed a statistically significant difference. But the outcome was not significant ($p = .197$, see appendix). Several Mann-Whitney tests were also carried out. Only one test with teachers and members of DEO staff had a significant result ($p = .025$, table 6.78). The test with students/parents ($p = .678$), students/DEO staff ($p = .059$), students/teachers ($p = .471$), parents/DEO staff ($p = .134$), and parents/teachers ($p = .272$) had non-significant results (appendix 6.7)

Table 6. 79 Mann-Whitney Test: Teachers vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue	Teachers	30	25.77	773.00
	DEO Staff	29	34.38	997.00
	Total	59		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	308.000			
Z	-2.234			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.025			

6.4.12 Female Students: Effect of Examinations

The effect of examination and its link with gender bias at home was examined with the statement: girls drop out because after failing the examinations, parents do not

want them to repeat the same grade. Figure 6.28 presents the summary of the responses. The figure shows that 95.4% of respondents provided specific response and 4.6% chose 'don't know'.

This statement showed strong disagreement among respondents as 51.7% (agree+strongly agree) had a positive response and 43.7% (disagree+strongly disagree) had a negative.

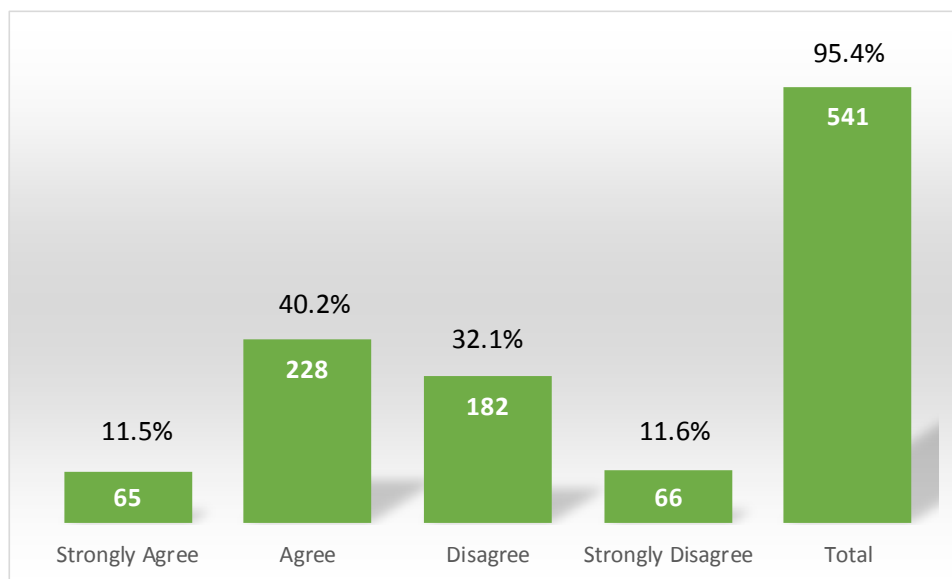


Figure 6. 29. Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade.

Table 6.79 below provides details of responses among different groups of participants and gender. Among teachers only one female teacher strongly disagreed. Four male and three female teachers chose 'disagree'. Fifteen male and six female teachers chose a positive response. Unlike other categories of respondents, the number of teachers who had a positive response (21) was more than double the number of teachers who had a negative one (8).

The respondents in other categories were divided nearly evenly between positive and negative responses. For instance, 15 parents gave positive responses and 13 gave

negative, 241 students were positive and 213 negative, and 16 members of DEO staff positive and 14 negative.

Table 6. 80 Response To: Girls Dropout Because After Failing the Examinations
Parents Do Not Want Them to Repeat the Same Grade

Gender			Respondents' Categories				Total
			Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
Male		Strongly Agree	30	1	1	3	35
		Agree	73	9	15	12	109
		Disagree	53	9	12	4	78
		Strongly Disagree	32	0	2	0	34
			188	19	30	19	256
Female		Strongly Agree	29	0		1	30
		Agree	109	5		5	119
		Disagree	97	4		3	104
		Strongly Disagree	31	0		1	32
	Total		266	9		10	285

6.4.12a Further Statistical Tests

Several non-parametric statistical tests were carried out to see if any groups of respondents had statistically significant differences. The Mann-Whitney test between male and female respondents did not have a significant result ($p=.420$) and the Kruskal-Wallis test among respondents' categories had a similar result ($p=.292$) (see appendix 6.8).

Disagreement was then identified at regional level. First, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted which had a significant outcome (table 6.80, $p=.029$). Then the Mann-Whitney test was conducted in pairs: Terai-hills ($p=.453$), Terai-mountains ($p=.008$) and hills-mountains ($p=.074$) (see appendix). Thus, it was found that the respondents from the Terai and mountains had a significant disagreement (table 6.81).

Table 6. 81 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Region of Residence

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Terai	175	288.76
	Hills	183	276.52
	Mountains	183	248.50
	Total	541	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	7.107		
Df	2		
Asymp. Sig.	.029		

Table 6. 82 Mann-Whitney Test: Terai vs Mountain

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Terai	175	193.31	33829.00
	Mountain	183	166.30	30432.00
	Total	358		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	13596.000			
Z	-2.634			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008			

6.4.13 Schools and the Provision of Library and Independent Study Facility

The last Likert statement included in the survey was: most schools in the district do not have a library or other independent study facilities. It was important to know if such facilities were available in schools because these facilities helped improve students' learning. Of the total number of respondents, 13.2% chose 'don't know' but the rest (86.8%) provided specific response.

The largest number of respondents (45.9%) chose 'agree' (see figure 6.29) but the second largest number of respondents (21.7%) chose 'disagree'. Of the respondents

who chose strong responses, 12% chose 'strongly agree' and 7.2% chose 'strongly disagree'.

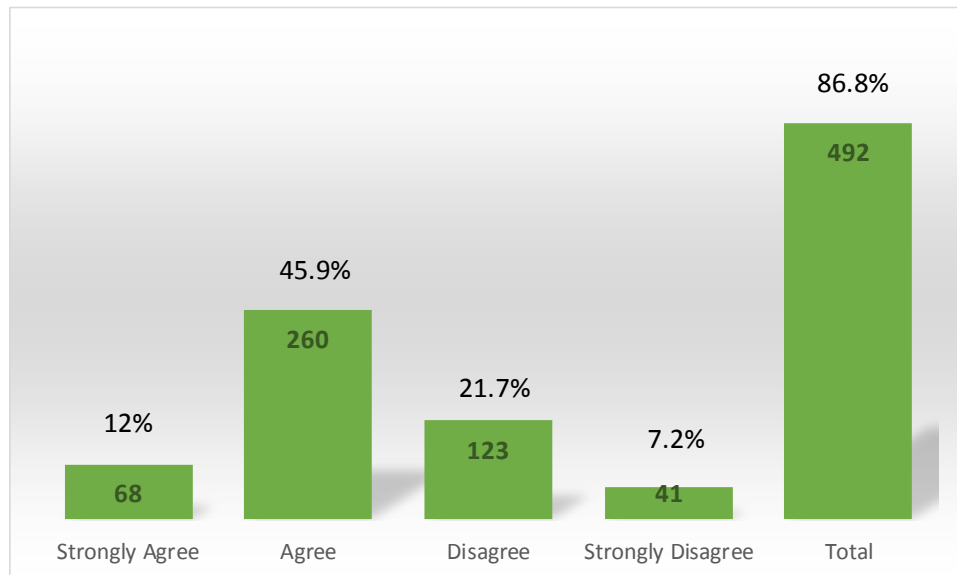


Figure 6.29. Most schools in the district did not have a library or other independent study facilities

The table below (table 6.82) presents the distribution of responses among different categories of respondents. It is noteworthy that most of the members of DEO staff (27) and most of the teachers (27) agreed that schools in the district lacked a library and any independent study facilities. A large majority of parents (20) also agreed with the statement. However, a small number of respondents disagreed in each of DEO staff (3), teachers (2) and parents' (6) categories. Student respondents tended to disagree more than other categories because 254 agreed and 153 disagreed.

Table 6. 83 Response to: Most Schools in The District Do Not Have a Library or Other Independent Study Facilities

		Respondents' Categories				Total
		Student	Parents	DEO Staff	Teacher	
	Strongly Agree	53	3	5	7	68
	Agree	201	17	22	20	260
	Disagree	116	5	2	0	123
	Strongly Disagree	37	1	1	2	41
Total		407	26	30	29	492

6.4.13a Further Statistical Tests

The analysis and findings presented by figure 6.29 and table 6.82 showed that the groups of respondents differed in the way they responded to the survey statement. Therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis and the Mann-Whitney tests were carried out to see if the disagreement reached statistical significance. The Kruskal-Wallis test carried out with respondents' categories had a significant result ($p=.001$, table 6.83).

Table 6. 84 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Category

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
	Student	407	256.59
	Parents	26	226.92
	DEO Staff	30	193.05
	Teacher	29	177.78
	Total	492	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	16.265		
df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.001		

The Kruskal-Wallis test was followed by six Mann-Whitney tests: i) students and parents, $p=.251$, ii) students and DEO staff, $p=.010$, iii) students and teachers, $p=.002$, iv) parents and DEO staff, $p=.232$, v) parents and teachers, $p=.082$, vi) DEO staff and

teachers, $p=.462$. The results show that two of the tests had significant results - students' responses showed significant disagreement with teachers and DEO staff (see appendix 6.9 for test statistics for non-significant results). Tables 6.84 and 6.85 present the test statistics of the Mann-Whitney tests that had significant results.

Table 6. 85 Mann-Whitney Test: Students Vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	407	222.89	90716.00
	DEO Staff	30	166.23	4987.00
	Total	437		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	4522.000			
Z	-2.580			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.010			

Table 6. 86 Mann-Whitney Test: Students Vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	407	223.09	90798.50
	Teachers	29	154.05	4467.50
	Total	436		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	4032.500			
Z	-3.096			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.002			

6.5 Reasons for Girl Students' Dropout

The final section of the questionnaire had three questions, each one with seven options and a choice to add their own answer. One of the questions asked the respondents to name three most important reasons of female students' dropout. The table below (table 6.87) provides the summary of their responses. The largest number of respondents (75.5%) mentioned poverty as the most important reason. The second largest number of respondents (66.1%) thought that parents' belief about a long-term support from sons caused problems. The reason chosen by the third largest group of respondents (48.1%) was that the school environment was not girls friendly. The fourth largest group of respondents (42.7%) thought formal examination system was a major barrier for girl students' schooling. Other reasons were: male family head was the household decision maker, government policy did not favour gender equality, teachers paid more attention to boys, early marriage, household work, gender biased culture and tradition and lack of parental awareness.

Table 6. 87 Factors Causing Girl Students' Dropout

Male Family Head Makes the Household Decision	Parents Believe that Boys Support Them in Their Old Age	School Environment is not Girls Friendly	Teachers Pay Attention to Boys Only in Schools	Grade Promotion is Based on Formal Exams	Government Policy Does not Promote Gender Equality in Schools	Poverty	Household Work	Early Marriage	Dowry System	Culture and Tradition	Parental Illiteracy, Lack of Awareness
144	375	273	54	242	128	428	10	33	1	5	6
25.4%	66.1%	48.1%	9.5%	42.7%	22.6%	75.5%	1.8%	5.8%	0.2%	0.9%	1.1%

6.6 What Should Schools Do to Help Girl Students to Graduate Successfully?

Table below (Table 6.88) provides the overview of respondents' recommendations for schools in regard to improving girl students' school retention. The largest of group of respondents (72.7%) thought the school should remain in constant touch with parents. Similarly, 57.5% of respondents (the second largest group) thought schools should take responsibility and make plans to prevent girl students from dropping out. According to 47.1% of the respondents (the third largest group), the presence of female teachers in school was another important aspect. Therefore, schools should have more female teachers. Other important things schools should do are: have separate gender toilets, use continuous assessment system effectively and provide an additional support to under achievers. A small number of respondents thought schools should run free hostels for girl students, increase scholarship quotas and create enjoyable school environment.

Table 6. 88 Respondents' Recommendations for Schools

The Schools Should Find the Ways to Retain Girls Students	The Schools Should Remain in Constant Touch with Parents	The Schools Should Have Female Teachers to Help Girl Students	The Schools Should Promote Continuous Assessment System	The School Should Have Separate Toilets for Boys and Girls	The School Should Provide Additional Support to Under Achievers	The Schools Should Attempt at Raising Parents' Awareness about	School Should Run Hostels for Girls	School Should have Enough Scholarship Quotas	There Should be Enjoyable School Environment
326	412	267	134	261	151	146	1	2	1
57.5%	72.7%	47.1%	23.6%	46%	26.6%	25.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%

6.7 What Should the Government do to Prevent Girl Students from Dropping Out?

In response to the question regarding the things the government should do to improve girl students' school retention rate, respondents provided a number of solutions (Table 6.89). The largest group of respondents (72.5%) thought the government should run awareness campaigns regarding female education. The second largest group of respondents (64%) thought the government should equip schools with sufficient resources and the required number of teaching staff. The next largest group of respondents (45.7%) thought that there should be enough number of scholarships for females from poor families. Similarly, 40.9% of respondents wanted the government to build sufficient number of schools in a district. The next group of respondents (39.9%) thought the government should reward schools with best male and female student retention rate. Some other recommendations provided by a small number of respondents were: have a legal provision about gender equality in educational institutions, provide free education for girls, emphasise on skills-based vocational education, guarantee jobs for girl students, and conduct effective monitoring.

Table 6. 89 Respondents' Recommendations for the Government

Conduct Awareness Campaign about Female Education	Reward the Schools Having Best Retention Rate	Ensure the Schools Have Sufficient Resources and teachers	Ensure That There Are Sufficient Number of Schools in a District	Provide Enough Number of Scholarships for Poor Families	Should Make Changes in Policy About Assessment Systems	Teachers Should Be Provided Trainings from Time to Time	Should Pass the Law Relating to Gender Equality in Education	Should Provide Free Education for Girls	There Should be Emphasis on Vocational Education	Should Guarantee jobs for Girls	Should Conduct Effective Monitoring
411	226	363	232	259	81	119	2	5	1	1	1
72.5%	39.9%	64%	40.9%	45.7%	14.3%	21%	0.2%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter includes the analysis of the survey respondents' background factors such as age group, religion, ethnic background, language spoken at home, household decision maker, household income and place of residence. The results show that there was a wide variation in the participants' background factors. Significant features of the respondents' backgrounds were that majority of respondents (48.85%) mentioned agriculture as their main source of household income. Only 16.4% of them mentioned formal employment and 11.2% mentioned entrepreneurship as their main source of income. This went along the main economic activities of the country. According to the year book of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) 'agriculture is the mainstay of the economy accounting for one third of GDP (Gross Domestic Product)' (CBS Yearbook, 2015, p.xiv). Likewise, a large majority of respondents (86.2%) had Hinduism as their religious background and the second largest group (6.7%) followed Buddhism. This also went in line with the national statistics that shows that the largest population of the country followed Hinduism and the second largest Buddhism. More respondents lived in the municipalities than in villages. Regarding parental education, out of 29 parents, only seven of them had education beyond high school.

The analysis of the school system-related Likert questions shows that the participants had agreement in some questions but there was disagreement in a number of issues. The issues that had some degree of disagreement among respondents were the effect of caste and religion, effect of government funding on female student dropout, the study performance of female students, girls' inability to share personal problems with teachers, the textbooks and student ability to deal with them, schools' lack of provision of separate teaching for different ability groups, schools' lack of concern for female students at risk of dropout, the effect of examinations on female students and schools' lack of libraries or independent study facilities.

Although the issues discussed showed certain level of disagreement among respondents, the results of the survey questionnaire complement the results from the qualitative inquiry. The survey responses confirmed the most significant findings

obtained from the interviews. Such findings are related to the effect of shortage of government funding on schools, the effect of student assessment system, the effect of female students not having courage to share their problems, effect of lack of additional support to slow learners. The issue of underfunded schools has a link to other issues such as unavailability of separate gender toilets, library and independent study facility, unavailability of drinking water and play-ground, shortage of teaching staff and large class sizes. Interview respondents raised these problems strongly and the survey results have confirmed them. The findings discussed in this and previous chapters establish the fact regarding the role of the state in perpetuating the gender inequalities in schools (Stromquist, 1990) and 'schools as sites for the cultural reproduction and development of social identities - chiefly relating to class and gender (Dillabough, 2001, p. 19). Gender constructed in social life is deeply rooted (Thapa, 2009) in lives of Nepalese men and women and functions as a determining factor for female students in Nepal.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study utilised the concept of inter-subjectivity to capture the multiplicity of perspectives of the phenomenon (Morgan, 2007 in Parvaiz et al., 2016) of female students' dropout from high-schools in Nepal. The researcher believed that every participant had his/her own unique interpretation (Parvaiz et al., 2016) of the phenomenon in question. To know how the participants made sense of the world they lived in and how they perceived the issue of female students' schooling was the major focus of the fieldwork. Hence, in-depth interviews were conducted and analysed in line with the interpretive methodological stance and surveys were administered and analysed to incorporate a more objective dimension in the study.

Two different sets of tools used for data collection generated different kinds of data. Although the survey questionnaire used for this research did not generate numeric data, the data obtained was of quantitative nature, as the data were obtained in categories such as 'yes' or 'no' and through a rating scale. The analysis of such close ended data was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistics. In qualitative interviews the participation and involvement of the researcher was crucial and active throughout the process but in survey questionnaire the researcher was distanced. Hence, a mixed approach of data gathering and analysis was utilised for this research.

This chapter includes interpretation of the findings in terms of the objective of the research set in the beginning of this thesis, comparison between the findings that resulted from two sources of data, comparison of the findings of this study with the previous studies reviewed in chapter two, strength and limitation of this study, practical implications and the original contribution claim of this thesis.

The research questions, that set the objectives of this study, were:

Main Question:

- What impact does the school system, teaching and assessment have on high school girl students' likelihood of dropout?

Sub questions:

- Is there any conflict between the norms and values inherent in the school system and the target of learning outcomes set by the curriculum?
- Is there any link between the examination system and girl students' dropout?
- What socio-cultural factors caused girl students to abandon their schooling early?

7.2 Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The qualitative interview generated elaborate, in-depth and rich data. The respondents were introduced to topics in the form of open-ended questions. They raised a wide range of issues related to the research questions and beyond them. The interview sessions had flexibility of time and respondents could raise any issues relevant to female students' school engagement. Therefore, there were new and surprising findings. The quantitative survey was conducted with a much larger number of respondents from all categories (students in school, teachers, head teachers, parents, DEO staff), except for females who dropped out. Dropped-out females were difficult to reach and only a small number identified as dropped-out were interviewed. Nonetheless there are issues about how people responded to the survey – did they really say what they thought or did they say what they thought the researcher wanted to hear or what presented them in a good light? These issues regarding respondents' sincerity are difficult to deal with. The only way is to be reflective of the process and to accept that the positionality of the researcher may have some kind of influence.

The findings, presented in chapter four, five and six, reveal that both methods had important findings. Comparing the findings from interview and survey data,

respondents from both groups agreed on several issues. However, they also disagreed on some issues. In addition, the respondents showed disagreement within their own groups on both kinds of data. Respondents' differing perspectives and interpretation of their situation were all 'contextual within a social time and place' (Creswell, 2007). The findings were those themes the majority of respondents agreed but those who disagreed were also given enough importance. The following section presents the comparison in detail.

7.3 Gender Theory and the Findings

The findings of this study presented in the following sections and reflected in the exclusion models (Fig. 7.1) draw upon these key conceptualisations of socialist and radical feminist gender theory for explanation of female students' drop out:

- i) State as the key agent to perpetuate gender discrimination and female subordination

The findings display that the state is unable to combat many socio-political and economy related complexities and barriers in Nepal. While aiming at progressive and gender balanced educational outcome, it is perpetuating discrimination and female subordination. Political intervention in schools should be aimed at improving gender equality, but the political parties using schools as tools to secure political gain has caused damaging effect so as not to eliminate the marginalising of girl students, but contributing to it. Such activities of the political leaders or the state operate as systems of social control to protect and perpetuate inequalities (Bacchi, 2010).

- ii) Patriarchy as a complex system of oppression, a systemic and trans-historical male domination of women (Beasley, 2005)

Women's oppression inherent in the structure of Nepalese society determines power relations and a gendered division of labour. Patriarchy perpetuates power relations that places male members in privileged positions. This has implications in girl students' educational gain. Omwami (2011) finds that poverty and patriarchy tend to work to further limit educational opportunities for women and girls. The socio-cultural exclusion model suggests that structures of male domination permeate through educational policy, the motives of political interferences in educational institutions, household practices of division of labour and educational preference for sons.

Feminists gender theories are applicable in interpreting the exclusion models. The radical feminists argued that patriarchy and power was the cause of female oppression and female subordination. Socialist feminists saw it as an interaction between economy, class and gender that helped perpetuate gender inequality (Stromquist, 1990). The root of such arguments lies in the structure of patriarchy as a governing mechanism in Nepalese society that causes an unequal distribution of power which results in an unequal distribution of resources and unequal access to opportunities.

iii) Nepalese schools as site for social reproduction of gender discrimination

The educational exclusion model provides an explanation for discriminatory practices in schools being the cause of female students' dropout. Gender insensitive school environments and assessment systems form the basis of females' exclusion in Nepalese high schools. Arnot (2002, p.24) argues that 'schooling produces both classed and sexed subjects, who are to take their place in a social division of labour structured by the dual, yet often contradictory, forces of class and gender relations'.

Rothchild (2012, p.2) views 'the family and school as social institutions where established gender patterns are embedded within the organizational dynamics of those institutions. In other words, the very institutions of family and school as historically determined put girls at a severe disadvantage when it comes to maximizing opportunities for education and future opportunity'.

Timsina (2011) argues that gender hierarchy operates strongly across each caste, and in each household, and defines woman's status. The findings indicate that this hierarchy is reflected in the educational institutions creating an imbalance that caused female students a difficulty in continuing their education.

Like Timsina, Bennet (2005) argues that individual's access to resources, participation in socio-economic, educational activities - in the countries like Nepal- 'are determined by their social identity (in terms of gender, ethnicity, language, religion, etc.) rather than personal characteristics (such as strength, intelligence and willingness to work)'. Particularly, 'social complexities such as gender hierarchy and power relation create barrier' not only in access to education for females but also in completing school education (Timsina, 2011).

The current educational policy is not able to improve the school completion rate of female students and the students from marginalised groups of students. The reason is that the structures of educational institutions are not yet inclusive. The gendered hierarchical structures deeply entrenched in the socio-political and educational set up constantly create barriers to female students.

However, the respondents in this study also accepted that change was taking place in Nepalese society and hence refuted a feeling of the fixity of gender relations (Stacey, 1993). Likewise, Rothchild (2012, p.125) who

conducted her study in Jiri district in Nepal believed that ‘socially constructed gender constraints are dynamic rather than static and can be negotiated. Schools could potentially help girl students and boy students empower themselves to negotiate and change these gender constraints and subsequently, transform their lives’.

7.4 Findings Where Both Interview and Survey Respondents Agreed

Both school system and socio-cultural findings highlighted the interplay of gender dynamics within a family context and in schools. In both domains, general notion of ‘cause and effect’ (Stone, 19194) was at work in relation to gender issues and female’s schooling outcome. These findings explain how and why social processes, standards, and opportunities differ systematically (Brush, 2003) for female students. There is a contradiction between the state’s desire to change the situation of gender imbalance in terms of educational outcome and its incapacity to do so for a number of reasons. First, the state’s incapacity is caused by lack of budget. Secondly, it is caused by the structures inherent within school systems. Without transforming the age-old system that has a body of staff who nurture gendered norms, the gender sensitivity and move towards gender equality cannot be materialised. Third, the socio-cultural environment which embodies patriarchal values. Fourth, the institution of marriage that perpetuates male domination.

7.4.1 Finding on School System

Radical feminists claimed that schools contributed towards male dominance (Spender, 1980) and marginalisation of females with persistent discrimination. Several shortcomings in Nepalese schools that disfavoured female students provide an empirical evidence to Spender’s argument.

Insufficient government funding to schools caused serious problems in school system. Both radical and socialist feminists claimed the role of state and schools as

key agents to perpetuate the gender discrimination (Stormquist, 1990). Aligned to such claim are the findings of this research because both interview and survey respondents complained regarding insufficient government funding. Because of under-funding of schools, the schools could not have enough number of teachers and classrooms. This resulted in large class size. Slow learners especially female students were neglected and pushed to the margins.

Role of state and schools is in other issues related to funding and availability of robust school infrastructures that facilitates both male and female students. But the respondents of qualitative and quantitative data both agreed in schools lacking fundamental facilities such as school library or a space for an independent study, separate gender toilets where female students could maintain privacy. Schools did not provide differential teaching to students with different learning capacity. Schools were unable to provide additional support to low performing male and female students at risk of dropout. This educational factor helped maintain gender imbalance rather than eradicate it. Female students suffered more in the Nepalese social context and caused dropout.

The notion of new system of teaching and evaluation were introduced in Nepal with educational reform programmes that were launched in line with achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals ((Acharya & Shiohata, 2014). The respondents of both data agreed in the effect of poor implementation of the assessment system that alienated low performing female students. Therefore, the student assessment system failed to abolish gender as an oppressive cultural reality (O'Brien, 1983). The findings suggest that the assessment system did not match the teaching staff's professional skill as teachers did not get required trainings. Class sizes posed barrier in carrying out continuous assessment. Method of pedagogy was teacher centred.

7.4.2 Findings on Socio-cultural Issues

Inequality operated differently in different contexts and spaces (Arnot, 2007). The findings from both data sources agreed that the poor family economy compelled parents to choose between son and daughter's education. So, the family economy encouraged gender bias as findings suggested that parents preferred male children over females, continuing patriarchal discrimination and inequality (Stone, 1994).

The respondents provided an explanation to parental discriminatory behaviour in their choice of son's education. According to respondents, the reason for parents having this bias was the marriage system. After their marriage, daughters went away to live in their husband's house. So, parents wanted sons to be educated and ignored their daughters' education.

Effect of caste and ethnicity on females' schooling is another issue that both data source agreed. However, a large number of survey respondents (30.2%) remained silent on the issue by choosing a neutral answer given that the issue surrounds complexities and controversy and many people become extremely careful discussing caste and ethnicity. Yet, the majority (39% of 69.8%) agreed that most female students from certain caste or ethnic group dropped out of school. Subedi (2013, p.56) argues that in a caste based hierarchical society 'identity is created and maintained by imposing restrictions on social intercourse and marriage with those who "do not belong", primarily those being inferior in terms of honour and prestige'. Respondents agreed on marriage as something that posed constraints on female students. In Nepal marriage is a strong social institution that imposes severe limitations to females, especially, in relation to continuing their education (Rothchild, 2013). After marriage, they become care taker of their husbands and in-charge of household chores. So, they are compelled to quit their desire to continue their education.

7.5 Findings Where Qualitative and Quantitative Responses Disagree

- **Female students could not share their personal problems with teachers:**

The interview respondents, especially female students, said that they shared their problems with female teachers. Teachers also said during interview that students came to them with problems and they helped them. However, other interview respondents said that female students remained reticent in terms of their studies or if they required additional support. The socio-cultural hierarchy based on power relation encouraged females to remain quiet. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), students respect knowledgeable teachers and display obedience to authority so much so that their own difficulty is concealed. On the other hand, a large majority of survey respondents (75%) thought that female students could not share their problems with their teachers. These respondents supported the view that school system reflected social hierarchy and power relation based on gender.

- **Lack of separate gender toilets:** This study finds that the issue of provision of separate toilets in schools for male and female students is an important issue. Interview respondents indicated that some schools had separate toilets but many still did not have. Lack of separate gender toilets caused difficulties for girl students especially when they had a period at school. They were not able to maintain their privacy and decided to drop out. But survey respondents were divided between positive and negative responses. This shows that this issue is controversial and the policy should provide sufficient attention to it.

7.6 Contradictory Views Within Interview and Survey responses

A huge majority of respondents agreed on some issues (see 7.2.2). Social construction of gender as a pattern of behaviour differs from location to location (Thapa, 2009). Similarly, how people interpret the issues regarding female students schooling behaviour and outcome differ from person to person. For that reason, some issues had contradictory responses among interview respondents and also among survey respondents. Such issues were:

- **Generally female students are weaker in studies:** This Likert statement was used to investigate how respondents' constructed gender in relation to academic performance of females. The issue had significantly divided responses among survey respondents because 36.3% respondents disagreed with the idea and 33.9% agreed. Interestingly, a significant number of respondents agreed to the statement. This is an indication of how females were perceived and how such faulty perception might have influenced the socio-cultural, political and educational system in the country.

The Mann-Whitney test showed that parents had a significant disagreement with teachers and DEO staff. Similarly, students had a significant disagreement with DEO staff.

- **Effect of ethnic minority and the caste system:** This study aimed to examine the situation of gender, caste and ethnic exclusion (Bennet, 2005) in relation to female students' educational outcome. Interview respondents provided contradictory arguments regarding the effect of ethnic minority and caste system on educational outcome. Those who said that ethnic minority and caste system had an effect on female students' dropout claimed the problem was severe among *Dalits* and other marginalised caste groups. But there were other interview respondents who said the problem of gendered educational outcome was in all caste groups and had nothing to do with the caste system.

Survey respondents were also divided in terms of their response regarding the effect of the caste system. A similar number of respondents gave negative and positive responses. (see section 6.3.1). The results of the Mann Whitney tests show that student respondents had significant disagreement with parents, teachers and DEO staff.

- **Lack of motivation in students:** Female students raised the issue of differential treatment from teachers on the basis of gender which was controversial. Female student interview respondents disagreed with teachers

and parents, saying that females were never encouraged to speak and adults ignored their difficulty. Whereas teachers and parents said they never did anything that led them to quit their studies.

- **Effect of government funding on school environment:** Survey respondents were divided in their responses regarding the effect of government funding. The difference was not at the level of ecological zone or the level of respondents' category. It was at district level. Respondents from a district in the plains had significant difference with respondents from three other districts, one from the plains, one from the hills and one from the mountains (section 6.4.4). However, interview respondents emphasised on the interaction between insufficient budget and exclusion of females in the context of school system.

7.7 New Findings

Interview respondents brought up a number of issues related to educational policy and the socio-cultural context when asked about female students' drop out. Such issues were not found in the studies previously conducted in Nepal. The respondents revealed that these issues about gender imbalance in educational outcome come up from within the educational reform policy itself. Such reform policies in the hand of untrained educational practitioners proved counter-productive and caused gender exclusion.

The district education offices and teachers agreed that the government had introduced some 'programmatic and systemic solutions' (Rumberger, 2001) to attempt to improve the situation of students' academic engagement and to stop students from dropping out. However, the respondents said that they had encountered several problems while implementing some features of the new policy.

Such problems were: poor implementation of the continuous assessment system, absence of reward and punishment within school system, teachers with questionable accountability and using unwanted political encroachment. Some issues outside the school system were: the superstitious belief of parents and the dowry system (see 7.6 for details).

On socio-cultural side, sending daughters to work to earn for consumer gadgets such as mobile phone, television was a surprising finding. The findings suggested that gender division and differential treatment between sons and daughters took place in such situation.

It was found that internal migration of working-class people caused daughters' school dropout. Migration posed challenges to these people in terms of cost and social integration. Participants said that the main challenge for girl students was that of safety. The schools and the state lacked measures to tackle the problem of safety.

Superstition regarding someone's fate and happenings in life is a practice that exists in traditional socio-cultural norms. The issue of effect of superstition on female students was raised by only three respondents but it was an interesting new finding. The finding reveals how superstitious beliefs eclipse people's rational thinking and how it causes gender inequality.

7.8 Relating the Research Questions to the Findings

This section relates the findings of the study to the key research questions of this research (chapter two and chapter three). The research tools were framed on the basis of these research questions and a large amount of data was collected and analysed. I now examine if the questions were answered by the findings.

The findings not only answer the specific research questions but often go beyond them uncovering complexities and constraints in socio-cultural, educational and

political arena. While answering, they question the sociocultural and educational institutions and structures that promote gender inequality.

7.8.1 What impact does the school system, teaching and assessment have on high school girl students' students' likelihood of dropout?

A number of previous studies (see chapter two for details) focused attention on socio-cultural factors in Nepal, India, Bangladesh and many other countries in different parts of the world. Few studies had a major focus on the impact of the school system on female students' drop out in Nepal. Therefore, this study aimed to find the impact of the school system on female students' dropout.

Findings revealed that both school system and socio-cultural factors contribute to perpetuate gender inequalities (Acker, 1987). A number of factors played a vital role in a student's decision to drop out from Nepalese high schools. These factors unfolded 'a man-made environment as a form of social oppression and an expression of power' (Weisman, 1994, p.3) which disfavoured female students.

Findings reveal that reform in policy and practices within schools were seen as positive signs. But the discrepancy between policy rhetoric and implementation at school levels showed that 'political and economic context of gender reproduction set the limits and critically affected the impact of any education reform and its effectiveness' (Arnot, 2002, p.104). It was clear that the school environment, and quality of teaching and the assessment system had a strong impact on female students' school engagement and the likelihood of dropout. There was a Continuous Assessment System (CAS) in lower grades and there was a formal examination system in higher grades. The low performers had to face tough examinations once they progressed to the higher grades. The females who failed the examinations began to get into a process of disengagement as there was no provision for retaking the exam and they did not have family support in repeating the grades. This was one of the factors in female students' dropout.

Respondents revealed that the issue of motivation was important. The school environment reinforced educational exclusion in case of female students. Female students were not encouraged to speak and share their problems with teachers. The infrastructural issues were linked to many other issues. Lack of a proper safety system in schools caused discomfort for female students. The lack of separate gender toilets was an issue in some schools. There was the question of sanitation even in schools that had separate toilets for boys and girls. Similarly, the lack of any facility for proper drinking water, lack of a library and independent study facility and the lack of playgrounds caused discomfort and low motivation in students. All the issues relating to poor school structure were caused by insufficient government funding. Such structural deficiency created gender hierarchy within school system where female students felt excluded.

Female students' feelings of disengagement were also caused by excessively large class sizes. The females who required individual attention and additional support felt excluded. Because of this they remained low performers, causing feeling of frustration and low self-esteem. Respondents also raised the issue of corporal punishment which scared female students. They remained quiet even if they had problems. Such signs were precursors of female students' dropout.

The findings also revealed that teachers' accountability was affected by their political affiliation and their involvement in non-professional affairs. Political encroachment was rampant in public schools and at different levels of educational administration. Teachers did not get pre-policy implementation training or any other kind of professional support (Mathema, 2007); so, they had low motivation. Thus, the school system was unable to operate as a co-ordinated unit in relation to dealing with the indicators of dropout, communicating with parents and making plans to check it. To sum up, 'a whole range of structures and activities, as well as values, attitudes, beliefs and morality, that in various ways supported the established order and the class and male interests' (Arnot, 2002, p.105) which treated female students as 'the other' causing them to quit their studies early.

7.8.2 Is there any conflict between norms and values inherent in the school system and the target of learning outcome set by the curriculum?

Most of the respondents' concern was that the new system introduced by policy and the objectives set by the new curriculum conflicted with the norms present in the school system and in society. For example: teachers did not know how to carry out CAS in a class of over 40 students. Students' took CAS as something which promoted them to the new grade even if they did not have the required level of learning achievement. Parents with low educational awareness thought teachers could not fail their children, who would be automatically promoted.

The findings revealed that teachers who had taught for over a decade were reluctant to switch to any new method of activity-based teaching prescribed by the new curriculum. Teachers complained that there were too many activities and teachers had limited time to carry them out. So, the curriculum was impractical. The government changed the policy to maximise the learning outcomes and to improve the retention rate of male and female students.

The problem was that the school system was not well equipped to implement such reforms. In spite of 'modernisation' efforts, the research findings of this study prove that 'schools in Nepal embody socially and culturally prejudiced values' (Pherali, 2011). This caused conflict between modernising projects that aimed for gender balanced outcome and the values inherent in Nepalese educational institutions and in the socio-cultural environment that promoted gender imbalance in terms of educational outcome.

7.8.3 Is there any link between the examination system and girl students' dropout?

Respondents revealed conflicting situations regarding student promotion and assessment system. It was found that student evaluation was based on Continuous Assessment System (CAS) until certain grades and formal examinations or summative

assessment in higher grades. The problem was in implementation and confusion between old and new method of assessment.

CAS was introduced in Nepalese schools in 1990 (Browne, 2016) with an aim to reduce drop out and repetition (Acharya & Shiohata, 2014). The new system was introduced with educational reform programmes that were launched in line with achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals (*Ibid.*). According to the respondents the existing population of teaching staff was reluctant to implement CAS for lack of training skills and other constraints such as large class sizes. All such factors impaired its effective implementation pushing female students to the marginal position which caused them to drop their schooling.

Respondents suggested that the examination system had a link with female students' dropout. The examination system's effect was on academically marginal students. Whether it was CAS or a formal examination, the assessment system affected these students. The respondents argued that poorly implemented CAS caused these marginal females to face a challenge of tough examinations in higher grades. Such students were most likely to fail the examinations. If they failed, they would have to repeat the grade when their fellow students went to higher grades. The failure would bring psychological pressure to bear on female students because parents began to think of their daughters' marriage. Parents quit hoping for their daughters' academic success (see section 4.1). Thus, the gender bias socio-cultural values were reproduced within school system.

7.8.4. What socio-cultural factors caused girl students to abandon their schooling early?

Findings revealed that various factors played a vital role in a student's decision to drop out from Nepalese high schools. Although Nepal has a unique socio-cultural context with its diversity of ethnicities and castes, the socio-cultural findings find an interpretation in radical feminist's argument that patriarchy and power facilitates an explanation of the oppression of females both within the school and also within the wider context of society in general (Yokozeki, 2009). Factors such as frail family

economy, early marriage, internal migration, religious and superstitious beliefs of parents and discriminatory behaviour toward females created an environment of socio-cultural exclusion.

Findings suggest that 'geographic and agro-ecological conditions, ethnic communities, education, economic status and migration determine gender roles' in Nepal (Thapa, 2009). Gender constraint functioned differently in different locations and ethnic groups. Caste hierarchy and economic inequality created an imbalance in opportunity and access to public services and education (Subedi, 2009) as respondents revealed that *dalits* had most cases of female dropout.

7.9 Findings and Exclusion Models

The findings were previously placed under two broad categories: School system related factors and socio-cultural factors. However, in fact three models can be formulated:

- i) Educational-exclusion model
- ii) Socio-cultural-exclusion model
- iii) Economic-political-exclusion model

These three models provide a better understanding of the findings regarding why female students drop out from Nepalese high schools. All three models are strongly connected to each other.

- i) Educational-exclusion model: This model draws upon a number of findings that confirm that the school system reproduces gender hierarchy and power relations because of which female students, instead of being empowered, are excluded from the opportunity of educational gain. Lack of appropriate support system, assessment system that encourages females to succeed and reward to uplift their self-esteem remain unhelpful and cause them to disengage themselves from the school

activities. Thus, such issues embedded in the school system create an atmosphere of exclusion.

- ii) **Socio-cultural-exclusion model:** This model incorporates a whole range of gender related issues as findings that are prevalent in Nepalese society. These issues explain why female students give up their hope and drop out. This model includes findings such as unequal labour division at home between a son and a daughter, preference of education of the son over the daughter (sons went to schools considered of better quality and daughters to public schools), male members of society being in leadership roles, the parents' intention of getting their daughters married early, daughters being the victim of parents' superstitious beliefs, the dowry system affecting daughters' education, and the effect of caste on a daughter's education. This model suggests that the issues that reinforce socio-cultural- exclusion in Nepalese society are deeply rooted in the family system and social environment.

- iii) **Economic-political-exclusion model:** This model consolidates findings that explain economic and political provision of the government institution and policy in relation to gender balanced schooling outcome. Bennet (2005) interprets this as government's unwillingness to represent and articulate the demands of less powerful Nepalis. The findings uncover the effect of widespread poverty in Nepal and schools suffering severely from constraint of resources. Unwanted political interference in schools deteriorated the situation disfavours female students. The respondents revealed that recruitment of key educational policy-makers and staff in district education offices were based on political faith. The government was unable to bring in policies to improve the economic level of people under the poverty line. The government was also unable to provide the right amount of scholarship to female students at risk of dropout. This affected the school environment and reinforced exclusion.

The following figure provides the summary of the models described above.

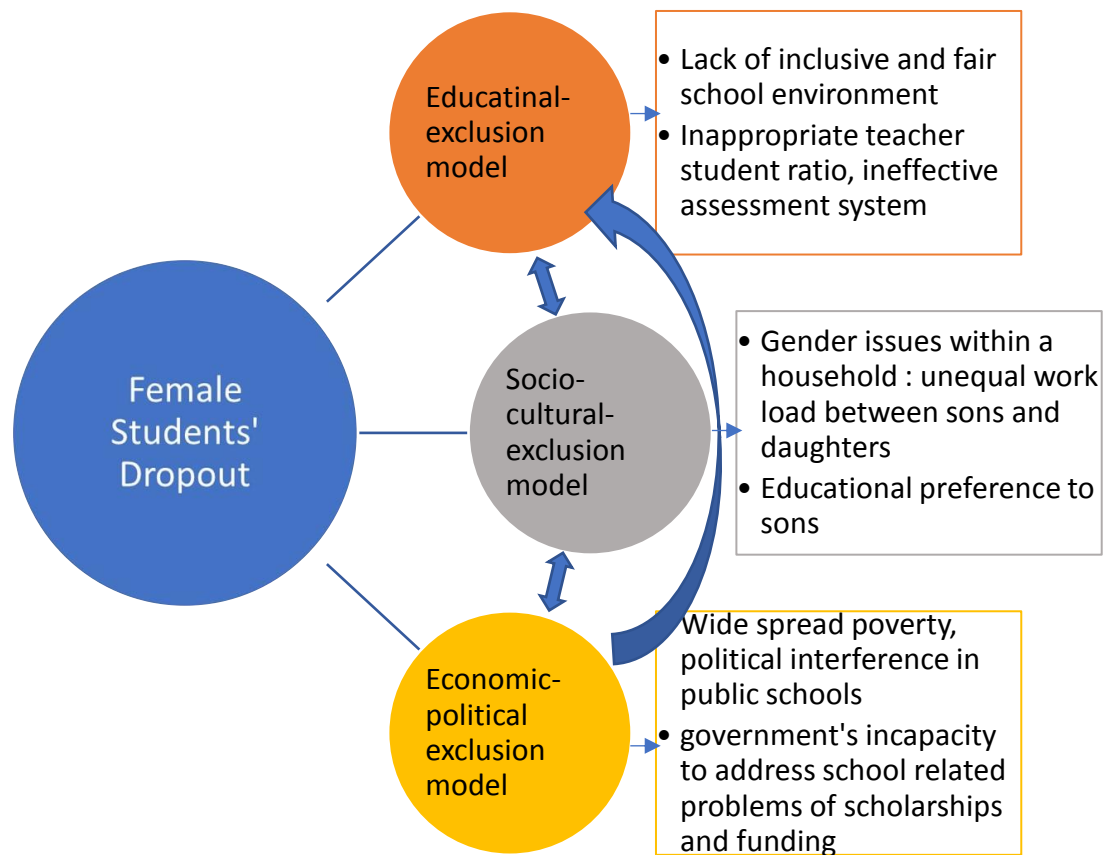


Figure 7. 1. Findings and exclusion models

7.10 Existing Knowledge and the Findings of this Study

The systematic literature review (see chapter two) conducted in the initial phase of this study provided an outline of the existing knowledge about female students' schooling outcomes. Studies based in Nepal and outside Nepal showed both the positive and negative factors which were useful in selecting interview topics and questions for the survey questionnaire. The findings of the reviewed literature showed that both in-school factors and socio-cultural factors significantly contributed to school dropout.

This section compares the findings of previous studies regarding female students' dropout with the findings of this study. A great deal of the findings of this study about the effect of socio-cultural factors and the factors from the school system on female students' schooling outcomes confirmed the findings of the previous literature. But this study also uncovered issues not previously revealed by the existing body of literature.

7.10.1 The Socio-cultural Issues this Study Confirms

A number of previous studies found that differential treatment on the basis of gender had an effect on female students' school retention (Rothchild, 2005; Jain 2006; Levine, 2006; Mohanraj, 2010). This study found that gender-based discrimination at home and in society had an effect on female students' school retention. Pressures of household chores and study at home pushed girls into marriage and leaving their school education. The respondents of this study confirmed that such treatment occurred and this affected girl students' schooling.

Beutel and Axinn (2002) found that 'marriage, family building and the childbearing process were some of the major causes of girls' dropout'. This study found early marriage to be one of the major causes. In Nepal early marriage was caused by ethnic group and region-specific cultural events. According to the respondents, such events provided an opportunity for teenage boys and girls to mix together, sing *dohori* (folk songs that contain questions and witty poetic answers) songs, dance together and eventually marry.

Makwinja-Morara (2009) found that the AIDS epidemic brought problems in some families with parents' illness and death. This had an impact on female students. Although AIDS was not the cause, the respondents of this study confirmed family problems of parental conflict, prolonged illness and civil war left single-parent families needing to take girl students out of education in Nepal.

Household economy and parental education had an impact on female students' dropout and caste and ethnic background had similar effects (Rothchild, 2005; Gahima, 2012; Jain, 2006; Levine, 2006; Makwinja-Morara, 2009; Queder, 2006; McNeal, 1997; Dancer and Rammohan, 2007). These studies found that poverty and parental awareness were responsible for female students' likelihood of dropout. This finding also relates to Sahidul's (2013) idea of maternal education and the mother's bargaining power in relation to the daughters' educational gain.

7.10.2 The School System Related Issues this Study Confirms

Abu-Rabia-Queder (2006) found that the modernising projects that modern institutions brought to the Bedouin context contradicted the traditional norms of the local society. In Nepal's context modern methods of teaching and the new curriculum policy contradicted traditional methods of teaching. There was also the problem of unskilled manpower. This study also found that home-school distance was a cause of female students' dropout in the hills and mountains of Nepal. This finding confirmed the findings of Jain (2006) and Makwinja-Morara (2009).

The present study agrees with the findings of Jain (2006), Seka (2012) and Gahima (2012) that there were effects of inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor infrastructural facilities (lack of library, laboratory, electric bulbs and fans, inadequate furniture, lack of play area), classroom shortages in schools (classrooms are overcrowded or classes are held outdoors), a lack of separate sex toilets and the absence of female teachers. The respondents of this study also raised the issue of insufficient government funding which caused all these problems in the school system.

Makwinja-Morara (2009) also found that failure in examinations had an effect on dropout and this study confirms this issue. Although some studies such as Griffin and Heidorn (1996) and Warren and Jenkins (2005) had some contradictory findings regarding the effect of examinations (see 7.6.3), Helmet and Marcotte (2013) found that there was an effect of examinations on senior students. Suh and Suh (2006)

found that the students' motivation and performance were related to the possibility of the completion of their examinations, and the present study's findings relate to this.

Mohanraj (2010) found that the government's provision of incentives for female students was not sufficient to convince parents to retain girl students in school. Respondents of the present study raised similar issues about scholarship quotas and amounts. They said that the criteria for the scholarship were not fair and the amount and quotas were not enough to motivate either parents and students.

Fitzpatric and Yoels (1992) found that there was an interplay between school structure and the regional effect on students' intention to drop out. The present study found a similar effect on females in the Nepalese context. In Nepal an interplay of region, culture and school structure affected female students' schooling.

This study agrees with McNeal's (1997) findings that the pupil/teacher ratio affected students' dropout. McNeal found that large pupil/teacher ratios 'reduced the quantity and quality of teacher student interaction', which pushed students towards isolation and increased the likelihood of dropout. In the context of Nepal, respondents revealed that the 'reduced quality and quantity of teacher student interaction' applied more to low performing female students who remained at risk of dropout.

7.10.3 The Findings in Which the Present Study Differs from Previous Studies

The findings of this study differed from Andersen-Fye's (2010) finding that pressure at home pushed girls to educational success. In Nepal's context, respondents revealed that the girls who were maltreated at home found a boy, married and started a family, giving up their school education.

Makwinja-Morara (2009) found that adolescent girls were lured by money into sexual relationships because of which they became pregnant and left their schooling. It

differed with the finding of this research that early marriage, not early pregnancy, was the cause of dropout in Nepal. But Makwinja-Morara's (2009) other findings (see 7.6.1, 7.6.2) were similar to this study's findings.

The results of the study by Griffin and Heidorn (1996) conducted in Florida showed that failure in the Minimum Competency Test (MCT) significantly increased dropout rates. Interestingly, Griffin and Heidorn concluded that the decision to drop out applied only to the academically bright students but not the low achievers, and minority students' dropout did not correlate with the results of the MCT examinations. However, the results of Warren and Jenkins (2005) conducted in the USA contradicted Griffin and Heidorn's findings. Warren and Jenkins came to the conclusion that 'the high school exit examinations were not independently responsible for higher dropout rates'. The type of examination, whether it was a minimum competency test or higher competency test, had no impact on students' decisions to drop out. The study also found no link between examination results and different ethnic groups.

The findings of this study contradicted both Griffin and Heidorn (1996) and Warren and Jenkins (2005), showing that both examination results and ethnicity had an effect on student dropout. Unlike Griffin and Heidorn this study found that low performers were at risk of dropout, not the academically bright students. The status of female students' school retention was strongly affected by these variables, as gender roles and the patriarchal family system played a vital role in the context of the Nepalese social environment.

Stash and Hannum (2001) found that neither urban residence nor higher levels of education among household heads facilitated gender equity in educational decision making. Also, there was no effect of gender on those who were already in school. The present study disagrees with the findings of Stash and Hannum (2001) because the present study found that parental education had an effect on female students' schooling outcome.

The present study did not find anything to confirm or disagree with Beutel and Axinn (2002) that the presence of non-family services weakened gender preference within a family. Likewise, two studies, McMahon et al. (2011) and Oster & Thornton (2009), had contrary findings regarding the effect of menstruation on female students' dropout. McMahon et al. (2011) found that menstruation had an impact on females' dropout but Oster and Thornton (2009) found that there was no impact of menstruation. The respondents of the present study did mention menstruation but did not mention a strong connection between menstruation and female students' dropout.

7.11 What is Original Contribution of this Thesis?

This study has come up with a number of original findings. It underpins the socialist feminists' interpretation of female's position within economy and family (Arnot & Weiner, 1987), reproduction of socio-cultural gender inequalities within school system and radical feminists' interpretation of patriarchy and power relations (Yokozeki, 2009) in relation to female's schooling outcome in Nepal. This study is original in that it is the first study with a sole focus on the school system's impact on female students' dropout in Nepal. This study confirmed a number of findings from the previous literature and expanded on them. However, there were findings that were unique in nature. The findings presented below were not found in the previous literature. Therefore, these findings are the original contribution of this thesis.

- **Effect of poor implementation of CAS:** The interview respondents repeatedly raised the issue of poor implementation of the continuous assessment system on dropout. They argued that promoting students to higher grades without a required level of learning achievement led to frustration and withdrawal in the students. Most affected among all were low performing female students. Teachers also complained that they had classes with too many students. Because of this, continuous assessment was not effective. They also said that many teachers had no idea how they should

carry out continuous assessment because until then they had only conducted formal examinations (section 4.1.3).

- **Absence of reward and punishment:** Interview respondents raised the issue of the absence of a fair system of reward and punishment. Their argument was that a fair system of reward and punishment could improve students' retention. According to them rewards should be for teachers who contributed to students' academic output, for schools that maintained a good retention rate and for parents who helped in getting their dropped-out female students back to school. There should also be some kind of punishment for teachers, schools and parents if they did not work to improve the existing retention rate (section 4.12). If such a system were in place, this would benefit female students.
- **Teachers' accountability:** Teachers' timely performance appraisal was an issue that head teachers and DEO staff raised in relation to teachers' professional behaviour and its effect on female students' dropout. The DEO staff argued that their inappropriate work load was the reason they could not provide effective and timely monitoring. Teachers' political affiliation and over-involvement in non-professional affairs were also reasons for their poor accountability. This was one of the causes of an unhelpful school environment and female students' dropout (section 4.3.2d).
- **Effect of political encroachment:** Interview respondents showed serious concerns over political interference in public schools and its effect on the overall school environment. The respondents argued that the tradition of using teachers and students as vehicles for political gain by leaders of political parties had negative effects on the school system. This affected teachers and students' accountability which affected the quality of teacher students' interaction. The low performing female students did not have the courage to ask for support. This will push them towards isolation and dropout.
- **Effect of superstitious religious belief:** Interview respondents said in different parts of the country people still followed what local *jyotisi* (one who foretells people's future by looking at their horoscope) instructed them to do.

These foretellers suggested parents married their daughters off early, pulling them out of their studies (section 5.10). Similarly, respondents also linked early marriage with the influence of Hinduism.

- **Effect of dowry system:** Interview respondents revealed that parents wanted their daughters to be less educated for reasons of dowry. Their argument was that educated daughters required more educated husbands who would make heavier demands for a dowry (section 5.9). This caused daughters' dropout from schools.

7.12 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This section reflects on the strong and weak areas of this research. Although the present study has a number of strong areas, it also has some limitations. Recognition of its strength provides the researcher with confidence to disseminate the findings and recognition of its limitations provides an opportunity to avoid such limitations in the future. It also makes future researchers aware of this.

7.12.1 Strengths

The primary source of data of the present study is qualitative face to face interviews and quantitative survey questionnaires. This study therefore has strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The strengths of the face to face interview are that it is flexible, it has an ability to capture the essence of participants' experiences and it exposes the human part of the problem (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Similarly, the interviewer has a chance to ask if the questions or answers are not clear. The interviewer can get into the depth of the problem as the respondents are not bound to choose certain answers.

The strengths of the survey questionnaire are that it involves a large sample size which enhances the generalisability of the findings. It is easy and quick to analyse, using statistical tools.

The present study has employed triangulation in its methods. Within each method it used different respondents from various geographical locations. The intention of using triangulation is to 'to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity' of the problem 'by studying it from more than one standpoint' (Louis Cohen, 2007, p. 141). This is the major strength of this research. Nepal has diverse geographical and climatic conditions and multilingualism and multiethnicity among its people. This study responded to such geographical diversity in the selection of its locations and in the selection of the respondents.

The selected locations were from three geographical regions: mountains, hills and terai. The selected districts from geographical regions also represented various development regions including the eastern development region, the Kathmandu valley, the mid-western development region and the western development region.

The respondents for interviews were selected from seven categories (teachers, head teachers, students in school, dropped out students, parents of students in school, parents of dropped out students, district education office staff) in order to incorporate a multiplicity of perspectives about female students' dropout. Teachers, students, DEO staff and parents were chosen using simple random sampling and dropped-out students and parents of dropped-out students were selected using purposive and snow balling sampling methods.

At the level of design this study includes both qualitative and quantitative data, adopting mixed or what Morgan (2007) called an intersubjective approach. Thus, the results of both methods provided an opportunity for comparison. This design has the strengths of both qualitative interviews and quantitative survey.

The duration of qualitative interview had flexibility and the respondents were allowed to raise issues through open-ended inquiry. The respondents' differing perspectives were reported and analysed. Therefore, this method was exploratory and thus allowed the researcher to go deeper into the underlying reasons of dropout.

The quantitative survey helped understand the issue of female students' dropout in a more objective way. It quantified people's perceptions, attitude and behaviour regarding the research issue of dropout.

The data collection was done systematically. Data analysis used NVivo 10 for interviews and SPSS 23 for survey questionnaires. Step by step analysis and a systematic approach of drawing conclusions was also a major strength of this study.

A further strength of this study is that it has findings beyond the research questions and there are findings that are unique in the literature.

7.12.2 Limitations

Although the present study has the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data, it also has the limitations of both methods. The limitation of the qualitative interview is that it can only include a small sample size. However, the data it generates is large and complex. Face-to-face interviews may have respondents bias (Cresswell, 2014; Janesick, 2011). Therefore, the researcher should use triangulation to manage this. In qualitative interview data, the participants' voices contradict each other according to their social context and unique experiences. Thus, it might be difficult to draw a conclusion. Although qualitative interviews are conducted with a limited number of respondents, they may take longer than expected. Thus, the data collection process is time consuming. Transcribing the interviews and their analysis is even more time consuming.

In the same way, the quantitative survey also has limitations. The survey data is limited in that the participants can only choose the answer they have been provided with and cannot provide their interpretation of the problem. So, such data lacks richness in respondents' experience and perceptions. A large sample is required for a quantitative survey which can be a major challenge for the researcher in difficult geographical locations such as the hills and mountains. It is also expensive and time consuming.

This study acknowledges the limitation posed by the effect of the researcher's positionality. Although caste based social interactions and discriminations based on caste hierarchy are outlawed in Nepal, it is deeply entrenched in Nepalese psyche and still exists in rural villages in the plains, the hills and mountains (Neupane, 2016). Although I did not reveal my caste and never introduced it during interactions with participants. Physical features such as the shape of my face that looked like that of Brahmins and Chhetris as opposed to the flat nose and narrow eyes of the people who belong to Tibeto-Berman root must have visible to participants. This could have had implications on how people responded to me, although during the fieldwork I tried not to think about it as thinking about it could shape the way I perceived respondents.

Students for interviews were included from grades six to ten and students for survey were included from grades eight to ten. The reason for including students from higher grades only in the survey was that the survey questionnaire demanded a higher level of understanding and maturity to respond to it. In this way the survey had this limitation, as it excluded respondents with low literacy.

A major limitation of the present study is that during the fieldwork, people were recovering from disastrous earthquake trauma. Consequently, only one school in a district was selected for data gathering. Two or more schools would have given urban/rural variation within each district.

The district education offices could not provide an up to date record of the dropout rates of individual schools within each district. So, this study had to use a random sampling method for selecting schools. If such information was available, the most affected schools could have been selected, which might have enhanced the validity of the data and the generalisability of the findings.

Likewise, a large number of students were involved in the survey but the number of respondents in other categories was small and dropped-out students were barely involved owing to recruitment difficulties.

In sampling, male students and teachers for interviews were selected randomly from total male population and female respondents for those categories were selected from female population. But the same method was not used for parents and DEO Staff because the it was difficult to be in touch with parents and DEO staff did not have enough female staff. Similarly, survey respondents were selected from the total target population for all categories. The aim was to include equal number of male and female respondents, although, practically, it was not possible because the researcher had to complete the data collection in a limited period of time. This was another limitation.

Interview respondents raised the issue of the need for a fair government policy to address the disparity of resources in private educational institutions and public schools. Privately funded schools were not included in the study as the literature indicated that the problem of dropout was acute in public schools. Their involvement would have given the private school teachers, students and parents' perspectives of the issue.

This study aimed to include policy makers and curriculum developers as respondents but could not do so because of time constraints. Their inclusion would have added yet another perspective of the issue.

7.13 Practical Implications

The objective of this research was not only to explore the problem of female students' school engagement and dropout, but also to derive practical implications from the findings. The following sections provide details of the implications this research has for policy makers, practitioners and future researchers.

7.13.1 Implications for Policy Makers

The findings of this study have important implications for future policymakers to work towards improving gender equality in terms of school completion rates. The findings reveal numerous problems in the school system, because of which female students at risk of dropout do not gain support and motivation.

Although the current educational policy has aimed to eliminate inequality between male and female students' educational attainment, it has failed to achieve it. The most important issue was the lack of coordination between the Ministry of Finance and education departments. This has resulted in underfunding and shortages of staff. There is also a lack of coordination between educational policy makers and the practitioners.

The findings suggest that the government's policy aimed at stopping school dropouts has met with a number of obstacles at implementation level. Based on the findings, this study concludes that future policy makers should take the following points into consideration to overcome the persistent legacy of interconnected caste, ethnic and gender-based exclusions (Bennet, 2005) and enhance the likelihood of female students' successful completion of school education.

- i. Practitioners do not seem to be ready to accept the change the policy aims at. The policy should include a strategic plan for teacher training and education. The policy should also include parental awareness programmes. Teachers' education and training will expose teachers to new methods of teaching and make them ready to put the policy into practice. This will also avoid confusion in teachers about the aims and objectives of the new educational policy. An example of this is the implementation of the continuous assessment system (CAS).
- ii. Educational policy should include a set of guidelines for the government to co-operate with the required amount of budget to equip public schools

with sound infrastructure and the required number of male and female teaching staff.

- iii. Policymakers need to assess the positive and negative effects of the current assessment system as it is implemented at the end of each academic year and devise a plan to eliminate the negative effects it has on students' retention. As discussed in previous sections, CAS also caused dropout.
- iv. This study found that the district education offices (DEO's) suffered shortages of staff which caused poor monitoring of schools in a district. Policy makers should cooperate with DEOs. Poor monitoring led to poor accountability in the school system. This had an effect on the school environment and students' retention.
- v. Policymakers should be aware of the way school supervisors are recruited by the DEO's. The respondents of the present study complained that the teachers who had been teaching for a long time and were tired of teaching obtained the school supervisor positions. Such supervisors lacked enthusiasm, energy and readiness to adapt to new ideas. This had an effect on the school environment and students' retention.
- vi. Policy makers should make sure that educational policy seeks to make school environments inclusive so that female students feel safe and comfortable. The plan should include the required physical facilities in schools and a good support system.
- vii. Policy makers should review the provision of incentives (scholarships, etc.) aimed at improving enrolment and retention of female students and students from marginalised ethnic groups. The respondents of this study revealed that the present incentives had not brought the results the policy aimed at. They said that there was no system to see if the incentives were properly used. The respondents also suggested that incentives should be provided to students who come from poor families, but not to all students who belonged to certain caste or gender groups. As per the quantity of the incentive, the respondents said that it was not enough to provide enough support to parents and motivate them.

- viii. Policy makers should pay attention to supporting low performing students so that such students do not feel left out or ignored. This would have a strong effect on retention of low performing female students.
- ix. Policy makers should also be aware of the students' economic background and provide an opportunity for learning vocational skills so that students coming from a low economic background could survive on their own after they graduated from high school. This would motivate the parents of both male and female students.
- x. Policy makers could also include a provision of reward in the policy guidelines. Rewards for the schools with the best female student retention rate would have a positive effect. There should also be such rewards for parents who bring their dropped-out daughters back to school.

7.13.2 Implications for Teachers, Practitioners from District Education Offices and Parents

Practitioners of education have a vital role in executing policy guidelines in such a way that the goals of gender equality in school completion rates set by the policy are achieved. Educational practitioners not only work toward achieving learning outcomes but can also motivate parents to retain their children in school education. Practitioners need to work with commitment and professionalism. If done so, they can bring positive results even with all existing constraints.

The following implications for educational practitioners and parents are based on this study's findings:

- i. School head teachers and teachers need to review their teaching methods and quality at regular intervals every academic year. The aim of these reviews should be to examine the learning outcomes that their classroom teaching has achieved.
- ii. The findings of this study raise questions about teachers' professional activities. School head teachers and local education officers should ensure that teachers are professionally committed. Teachers' should not allow

their political beliefs and other non-professional commitments to get in the way of professionalism. The impact of this would be on students' learning outcome and school retention.

- iii. The district education office staff need to develop practitioners' appraisal systems to make sure that teachers, educational trainers (resource persons) and school supervisors are accountable. Respondents said that in remote mountainous districts, many schools never had a chance to see and know who their school supervisor was because they never reached there.
- iv. Teacher trainers known as resource persons (RPs) from the DEOs should make sure that teachers have the necessary knowledge about carrying out students' assessment following the policy guidelines. During the interviews, teachers said they were not sure how they should design and carry out the continuous assessment of individual students. The implication of this finding is that the DEO needs to develop an impact assessment of teachers' training sessions.
- v. Education practitioners should have a plan to increase parental involvement in their children's education. The school staff should not only be in regular communication with parents but also conduct parental awareness programmes. Improved parental awareness will help female students in completing their school level education.
- vi. Findings presented in the socio-cultural exclusion model indicate the need for action on the parents' side as well. Parents need to realise that education for daughters is as important as education for sons. They need to be in regular touch with schools and cooperate with teachers and head teachers.

7.13.3 Implication for future researchers

This study has several findings about the effect of the school system and assessment system on female students' drop out. But such findings need to be expanded further by future researchers. Intervention studies would be more valuable. The following points will be useful for future researchers:

- i. This study collected data from only one high school from each district location. Future researchers exploring the issues of dropout can collect data from at least two or more schools from both urban and rural areas. This will provide the researcher with an opportunity to compare findings between urban and rural areas.
- ii. This study focused on exploring factors that caused female students' dropout from high schools. Future researchers can focus on dropout in both primary and secondary schools and compare the findings between primary and secondary schools.
- iii. Further exploration can be done to investigate the correlation between political influence in schools and the quality of teaching. Similarly, further research can be carried out to find the relation between the quality of teaching and drop out behaviour.
- iv. This study aimed at exploring the effect of the school system and assessment on female students. Future researchers can explore the effect of the school system and assessment on both male and female students.
- v. This study did not select respondents from privately funded schools. Future researchers can include respondents from both private and public schools in order to compare and contrast the perspectives of respondents from the two different school systems.
- vi. This study aimed to include respondents from the Ministry of Education and curriculum development centre but could not do so because it suffered time constraints during data collection. Future researchers could also incorporate the views of policy makers and curriculum developers regarding students' dropout.
- vii. This study explored the effect of the overall school system and assessment on female students' dropout. However, future researchers could have a sole focus on finding links between the assessment system and dropout behaviour.

- viii. This study has its focus on female dropouts in Nepal. Future researchers could have a cross-country comparative study with a scope of broader South Asian comparison.
- ix. It would also be interesting if case studies of individual dropped-out male and female students were included in the study.

7.14 Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, my own family circumstances, the situation of female education in my neighbourhood and the situations witnessed during my professional career as a teacher motivated me to carry out this research. The educational outcomes of female members of the society where I grew up has changed since then and is better now. But yet the change is not enough. Reports still show that there is disparity between male and female students' retention rate in high schools. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the effect of the school system on female students' schooling outcome.

This study took place when various educational policy changes aimed at improving male and female students' school retention rates and improving learning outcomes were also taking place. Such policy changes included the restructuring of school and assessment systems (MOE,2009). One of the major changes the new policy introduced was the continuous assessment system (CAS), which replaced traditional formal written examinations. The purpose of the new assessment system was to reduce school dropout rates. But the teachers who were selected for the interview and survey of this study revealed that they suffered a lack of knowledge, skills and the required student-teacher ratio to implement the CAS in the right way. Thus, it was found that the norms of tradition in the school system caused problems and the new policy failed to achieve the gender balanced outcome.

This study found that inequality between male and female students in educational attainment is caused by a number of factors. Three exclusion models developed from

the findings summarise the outcome of this study: the socio-cultural-exclusion model, the educational-exclusion model and the economic-political-exclusion model. The exclusion of females in various circumstances determines whether they stay in school or drop out.

The socio-cultural-exclusion model included several findings. The major barrier such as gendered hierarchy (MacKinnon, 1979) within the family system and in the wider society not only caused imbalance in labour division between male and female members at home but also led to the consideration that education for females was not important. A vast majority of respondents revealed that the male head of the family made major household decisions. Such power relations within the family favoured sons in terms of educational participation over daughters. This model also included factors such as caste and ethnicity. Female students' retention was found to be low in the disadvantaged marginalised groups of people such as '*dalits*', *madhesi* and *janajatis*. The people from less privileged communities were found to have a low level of awareness of education and were victims of superstitious religious beliefs. The dowry system affected female students in the *madhesi* communities, as this system gave parents a financial burden in the case of marriage, forcing them to pull their daughters out of school and marry them off early. This clearly explains how the organisation of patriarchy (Stacey, 1993) has exploited females and excluded them from educational gain.

The educational exclusion model incorporated findings that explained why the new educational policy failed to eliminate the system that perpetuated discrimination (Timsina, 2011) in the school environment and reinforced exclusion of females. Several school related factors such as the low level of students' engagement, poor quality of teacher- student interactions and poor quality of teaching contributed to creating an unhelpful school environment. A low level of teachers' and students' motivation and accountability resulted in poor learning outcomes. In addition, the public schools lacked a support system for students who could not perform well. The low performing female students required additional support. The lack of such a

system caused female students' dropout. The assessment system used inappropriately was another cause of dropout.

The economic-political-exclusion model brought together findings that showed the effect of poverty, government's allocation of funding to public schools and politicisation in schools. Such findings suggest that the government's funding support for improving school infrastructures and supply of the required number of teaching staff can bring many positive changes in terms of the female students' retention rate. The political parties' unwanted encroachment in school administration contaminated the school environment, which should have had a purely academic space free from such contamination. They seemed to have pursued this course in order to do what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) meant by strengthening of power relations and reinforcing the legitimacy of domination in schools. It worked towards silencing females and promoted gendered outcome in favour of male members. Such practices severely affected students at risk of dropout, such as female students.

These conclusions about the findings were drawn after a careful observation and systematic analysis of respondents' similar and differing perspectives and interpretations of educational reality in Nepalese high schools. Thus, this study employed intersubjectivity as a theoretical background and believed that meaning is 'socially mediated through interactions' (Andersen, 2008) and an individual respondent's views were shaped by his/her own unique experience. Socialist and radical feminist theories were employed in order to guide the study and interpret findings. Particularly the conceptualisations such as socio-cultural reproduction, patriarchy, state as a key agent of perpetuating the gender discrimination were used.

In some issues, children's views differed from those of adult participants. For example, students argued that female students did not get as much support as they required from parents and teachers. According to them, teachers never encouraged girls to share their problems. Teachers and parents disagreed with students' complaints. Teachers and parents argued that they never wanted female students to

be quiet and were always ready to support them. But it was the students' fault for not asking for help.

Teachers and students had differing views about the quality of teaching and provision of additional classes. The students complained that teachers ignored their classroom teaching because they wanted students to be compelled to attend their additional support classes where they charged students large fees. Female students from low economic family backgrounds could not afford to attend these classes. Such female students ultimately lost confidence and decided to quit their schooling. But teachers rejected such complaints saying that they ran such classes only after they received requests from some parents.

Another example of such differing perspectives was that some district education office (DEO) staff (particularly those from Kathmandu and Jhapa) denied that there were problems in implementing educational policy and that it impacted female students' school retention. They defended the policy in practice, saying that it was very good and was bringing good results. But the other stakeholders did not agree with such views and discussed numerous problems (see chapter 4).

To sum up, the public-school system requires substantial action to uplift the quality of teaching and support systems in order to obtain gender equality in relation to students' school retention. The government should equip public schools with the required infrastructure and the number of male and female teachers in schools. The most important thing for the government is to keep educational institutions away from political interference. The government should conduct an impact assessment of the scholarships and incentives provided to female students and the students from marginalised groups of people. School-parent communication and parents' involvement in their children's schooling needs to be the main focus. The public schools need to bring more and more parents into schools on a regular basis and launch parental awareness activities. Thus, the public schools would not only carry out their usual teaching activities but also be centres of social-educational activities.

This will help avoid the existing hierarchies and inequalities existing in society and in schools which compel girl students to drop out.

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Appendices

Appendix 2. 1 Literature Search Summary

Databases	Keywords used	Word combination	Number of hits	relevant on first sight	Most relevant	Repetition among the most relevant	Selected books/articles for Review
Web of Science	Girls' Education	<i>AND Nepal</i>	63	7	5	2	3
	Girls' school	<i>AND drop out, AND Nepal</i>	4	3	1		1
	Girls' school	<i>AND drop out, AND India</i>	12	3	0		
	Girls' school	<i>AND drop out, AND South Asia</i>	1	1	1	1	
	Gender	<i>AND girls' schooling AND Nepal</i>	15	5	4	4	0
	Female Students	<i>AND dropout AND Nepal</i>	1	0	0		0
	High School Curriculum	<i>AND female dropout</i>	37	3	0	0	0
	High School System	<i>AND female dropout</i>	90	7	1	0	1
	High School	<i>AND examinations AND dropout</i>	82	13	3	2	1
	Teaching, Assessment	<i>AND High school AND female AND dropout</i>	5	0	0	0	0
	School attainment	<i>AND dropout</i>	92	29	1	1	0

Scopus	Girls' school	AND drop out, AND Nepal	3	1	1		1
	Girls' school	AND drop out, AND South Asia	2	0	0		0
	Girls' school	AND drop out, AND India	10	4	0		0
	Girls' dropout	AND High Schools, and Nepal	2	1	1	1	0
	Gender	AND girls' schooling AND Nepal	4	3	2	2	0
	Girls	AND education AND Nepal <i>Exclude: Medicine, Environment, Business subject area</i>	21	6	1	1	0
	High School Curriculum	AND female dropout	37	3	0	0	0
	High School System	AND female dropout	107	5	0	0	0
	Teaching, Assessment	AND high school/ AND female AND dropout	1	0	0	0	0
	School Attainment	AND dropout	0	0	0	0	0
	High School	AND Examinations AND dropout	82	7	2	0	2
ERIC	Girls' dropout	Nepal	3	1	1	1	0
	Girls' Schooling	Nepal	11	7	2	2	0
	Female Schooling	Nepal	9	4	2	2	0
	Girls' School Dropout South Asia (Since 1995, Journal articles, females, dropouts)		18	4	2	0	2
	Gender and girls' schooling in Nepal		4	4	1	1	0

	High School Curriculum and female dropout		37	4	0	0	0
	High School system and female dropout		77	14	0	0	0
	High School Examinations and dropout		80	10	2	1	1
	School attainment and dropout (journal article, high school)		40	9	1	0	1
	Teaching, assessment and high school female dropout (since 1990, high school)		38	3	0	0	0
ProQuest	Girls, Schooling	Nepal	37	5	4	2	2
	Gender	AND Girls' Schooling in Nepal	4	2	2	2	0
	Girls' dropout	AND Nepal	17	2	1	0	1
	Girls' dropout	AND high schools AND South Asia Exclude: Trade Journals	96	3	1	1	0
	High School Curriculum	AND female dropout (refined by: Journal article/book/book section/working paper)	285	7	1 but excluded / published before 1990	0	0
	High School System	AND female dropout (narrowed by: education, 1990-2015)	41	0	0	0	0
		AND high school/ AND female AND dropout (Social Sciences, peer-reviewed)	63	3	1	1	0
	High School Examinations	AND dropout (peer reviewed, article)	672	27	2	1	1

	School Attainment	AND dropout (peer reviewed, 1990-2015, article, educational attainment)	30	8	0	0	0
Google Scholar	dropout of girl-child in schools in Nepal 2005-2014		551	51	5	1	4
University of Dundee library and learning center search tool	Girls' School Dropout in Nepal		General search 524, <i>Refined to 'Peer Reviewed, Journal article, Education 55</i>	9	6	3	3
TOTAL			3,308	278	56	32	24

Appendix 3. 1 Interview Schedule for Policy Makers/ District leaders

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	Please tell me a little about yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What position do you hold and how long have been in this position? • What are your job responsibilities? • What was your own background before you took this responsibility – working class, middle class, etc.
	Please tell me a little about your educational background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did you do your schooling? • What school/type of school did you attend? • Where did you do your higher education? • What is your educational qualification?
Girls' Schooling Outcome/dropout	Please tell me a little about the situation of girl students' schooling outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the situation of girls' schooling outcome in this district/ in the country? • Is it critical? Does it need special attention? • Do you know the girls' school completion rate? • Do you think dropping out is OK for girls? • Do you think girl students' dropout is significant among certain ethnic groups?
Positive and Negative Factors	What do you think are the main things that prevent girls from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the main reasons for girl students' dropout? • What other barriers are there to prevent them from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reasons for drop-out? • Who do you think is responsible? Is it school? Or the family circumstances? Or the government policy? Why? • What is the negative side of the current curriculum/policy?
	What things can help girls to complete school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further supports can the family give? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls? • Any positive factors within school? • Any positive factors in current policy?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Policy Factors	What kind of support does the current policy provide to girls to ensure that they graduate successfully?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific plan does the current policy include to enhance girls' schooling outcome? • Do you think the current high school policy needs change to improve female students school attainment? • Do you see any major problems? • Do you think the current policy provides sufficient finance to high schools? • Do you think the current policy provides enough freedom to high schools for making decision by themselves?
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent girls' from dropping out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done to get the dropout children back to school? • Can school do something? For example: no written examinations or a different method of grade promotion? • Can you suggest any changes or improvements in high school curriculum and policy that may be helpful for girls in continuing their schooling? • Is there anything else you have not already said?
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 2 Interview Schedule for Teachers/Head Teachers

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	Please tell me a little about yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What gender are you? • Which subject do you teach (did you use to teach)? • Why did you decide to be a teacher/Head Teacher • How do you find teaching (managing school) ? • How long have you been teaching (working as a head teacher)? • What kind and frequency of training/professional development opportunities have you had? • What was your own background before you became a teacher – working class, middle class, etc.
	Please tell me a little about your educational background.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did you do your schooling? • What school/type of school did you attend? • Where did you do your higher education? • What is your educational qualification?
School Background	Please tell me a little about the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How wide a geographical area does this school cover? • What is the total number of students in this school? • What is the total number of teachers? • Number of male teachers and number of female teachers? • Could you please tell how many male students and how many female students are in your school? • Could you tell a little about their ethnic and home language backgrounds?
Student drop-out	How significant is the occurrence of female students' dropout in this school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many students stop coming to school permanently? Males/females? • How often do you monitor dropout rates? • Do you think girl students' dropout is significant among certain ethnic groups? • Do you think dropping out is OK for girls?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Positive and Negative Factors	What do you think are the main things that prevent girls from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are the main reasons for girl students' dropout? • What other barriers are there to prevent them from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reasons for drop-out? • Who do you think is responsible? Is it school? Or the family circumstances? Or the government? Why? • Are girls too much worried about failure in examinations and decide to drop out? • What do you think of corporal punishment? Is it in practice? Does it have an effect?
	What things can help girls to complete school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further support can the family give? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls? • Any positive factors within school?
School Factors	What kind of support does the school provide to girls?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the teachers and the head teacher show concern about girls in school? • Especially about their health and school attendance? • Does the school make allowances in the subject girls find difficult? • What kind of help do you provide to the girls at risk of dropout? • What kind of punishment and reward system do you have in the school? • Does the school have a library and other independent study facilities?
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent girls' from dropping out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done to get the dropout children back to school? • Can school do something? For example: no written examinations or a different method of grade promotion? • Have the school had any new strategies to help the problem in the future? • Should the government have specific plans about dropout children? • What kind of plans, do you think, could help them?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you suggest any changes or improvements in school that may be helpful for girls in continuing their schooling?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 3 Interview Schedule for the Girls/Boys in School

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	Please tell me a little about yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name/age Your interest/hobby? What kind of family are you from? Nuclear or extended? What school/type of school do you attend? Parents' level of education? How important do you think is education? (Value of education)
	Please tell me a little about your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many are in your family? How many brothers and sisters do you have? How many of each (of school age) are in school? Do you have any other younger/older sisters/brothers?
Study Performance	I want to ask you a little about how you are doing at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far is it for you to go to school? Walking, by bus, or other means? What is your best subject? What is your most difficult subject? Are you too worried about improving performance in the difficult subject? How do you perform in examinations? Did you ever experience failing the examinations and repeating the same grade?
Perception on student drop-out	What about the occurrence of dropout? Do you think that is normal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you had any of your classmates dropped out? Do you find that some girls have left the school permanently? Do you think this is normal? Do they wish to quit study themselves? Or is it because of some other reasons? Do you think dropping out is OK for girls?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Positive and Negative Factors	What do you think are the main things that prevent girls from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other barriers are there to prevent them from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reasons for drop-out? • Who do you think is responsible? Is it school? Or the family? Or the government? Why? • Are girls worried too much about failure in examinations and decide to drop out?
	What things can help girls to complete your school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further supports can the family give? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls? • Any positive factors within school?
School Factors	What kind of support do you expect from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the teachers and head teacher show equal concern for girls and boys in school? • Especially about their health and school attendance? • Does the school make allowances in the subjects girls find difficult? • What kind of help do you get from the teacher? • How friendly are the teachers and how easy is it to speak to them about your difficulty? • Do the students get corporal punishment? • Have you ever experienced it? • How do you feel about examinations? • Does the school have a library and other independent study facilities?
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent girls' from dropping out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done to get the dropout children back to school? • Can school do something? For example: no written examinations or a different method of grade promotion? • Should the government have specific plans about dropout children? • What kind of plans, do you think, could help them?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any idea that would help prevent girls from dropping out from school?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you suggest any changes or improvements in school that may be helpful for girls in continuing their schooling?
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 4 Interview Schedule for the Parents of Girls in School

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	<p>Please tell me a little about yourself.</p> <p>Do you work? What do you do?</p> <p>What about your education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of work: classify as lower working class, upper working class, middle class, etc. Or as manual, clerical, other? School education? Primary or secondary? College education? University education? If not any education, what was the reason behind? Other family members' education? How important do you think is education? (Value of education)
	Please tell me a little about your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many children do you have? How many sons? Daughters? How many of each (of school age) are in school? Do you have any other younger daughters? Sons?
Children's Study Performance	I want to ask you a little about your daughter's study. How is your daughter doing at school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far is it for her to go to school? Walking, by bus, or other means? What is her best subject? What is her most difficult subject? How does she get on with the other children? What kind of help does she get from the teacher? Is she too worried about it? What is it? How often do you go to school to speak about it to the teacher? How easy is it to meet the teachers and how do they respond to your concern about your daughter's study?
Perception of	About the girls who drop out, do you think that is normal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you find that some girls drop out permanently? Do you think this may happen to your

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
		<p>daughter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not why? Or if yes, what could be the reason? • Do you think is it ok for daughters but not the sons?
Positive and Negative Factors	What are the main things that prevent daughters from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think is the main reason for girls to dropout? • What other barriers are there to prevent them from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reason to drop-out? Or, • Who do you think is responsible? Is it school or the family circumstances? Or the government? Why? • Do daughters get scared of failure in examinations and decide to drop out?
	What things can help daughters to complete their school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further support can the family give? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls by your daughter? • Any positive factors within school?
School Factors	What kind of support do you expect from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the teachers and head teacher show any concern about girls in school? Especially about their health and school attendance? • Does the school make allowances in the subject girls find difficult? • Is your daughter too much worried examinations? • Or worried about anything else? • Does the school have a library and other independent study facilities?
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent girls' drop-out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done to send the dropout children back to the school? • Can school do something? • Should the government have specific plans about dropout children? What kind of plans, do you think, can help them?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any idea that would help prevent girls from dropping out from school? Can you suggest any changes or improvements in school that may be helpful for daughters in continuing their schooling?
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 5 Interview Schedule for the Girls Who Dropped Out from School

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	Please tell me a little about yourself. Do you work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How old are you? School education? Up to which class did you go to school? Other family members' education? What school/type of school did you attend? What do you do at present?
	Please tell me a little about your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many are in your family? How many brothers and sisters do you have? How many of each (of school age) are in school? Do you have any other younger/older sisters/ brothers?
Study Performance	I want to ask you a little about your study. How were you doing at school before you dropped out?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How far was it for you to go to school? Walking, by bus, or other means? What was your best subject? What was your most difficult subject? Were you too worried about it? What is it? How did you perform in examinations? Did you ever experience failing the examinations and repeating the same grade?
Perception on student drop-out	What about the occurrence of drop out? Do you think that is normal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you find that you have left the school permanently? Do you think this is normal? Did you wish to quit study yourself? Or is it because of some other reasons? Could you tell what was the reason? Do you think dropping out is OK for girls?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Positive and Negative Factors	What do you think are the main things that prevent girls from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other barriers are there to prevent them from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reasons for drop-out? • Who do you think is responsible? Is it school? Or the family circumstances? Or the government? Why? • Are girls too much worried about failure in examinations and decide to drop out?
	What things can help girls like you to complete your school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further support can the family give? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls? • Any positive factors within school?
School Factors	What kind of support do you expect from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the teachers and head teacher show concern about girls in school? • Especially about their health and school attendance? • Does the school make allowances in the subject girls find difficult? • What kind of help did you get from the teacher? • How friendly were the teachers and how easy was it to speak to them about your difficulty? • Do the students get corporal punishment? Have you ever experienced it? • Were you too much worried about examinations? • Or worried about anything else? • Does the school have a library and other independent study facilities?
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent girls' from dropping out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be done to get the dropout children back to school? • Can school do something? For example: no written examinations or a different method of grade promotion? • Should the government have specific plans about dropout children? • What kind of plans, do you think, could help them?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any idea that would help prevent girls from dropping out from school? Can you suggest any changes or improvements in school that may be helpful for girls in continuing their schooling?
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 6 Interview Schedule for Parents of Dropout Girl/boy Students

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Background	<p>Please tell me a little about yourself.</p> <p>Do you work? What do you do?</p> <p>What about your education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of work: classify as lower working class, upper working class, middle class, etc. Or as manual, clerical, other? School education? Primary or secondary? College education? University education? If not any education, what was the reason behind? Other family members' education? How important do you think is education? (Value of education)
	Please tell me a little about your family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many children do you have? How many sons? Daughters? How many of each (of school age) are in school? Do you have any other younger daughters? Do you think the same thing will happen to them? If not, why not?
Children's Study Performance	I want to ask you a little about your daughter who dropped out. How did your daughter perform when she was at school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was her best subject? What was her most difficult subject? How did she get on with the other children? What kind of help did she get from the teacher? Was she too worried about it? What is it? Did you go to school to speak about it to the teacher? Did your daughter prefer to be at home?
Parent	Your daughter dropped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you find out that your daughter

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
	out from school. Do you think that is normal?	<p>stopped going to school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was your reaction? • Do you think it is ok for daughters to drop out but not the sons? • What has she been doing since she dropped out? • How do you find her now: happy/ unhappy?
Positive and Negative Factors	What were the main things that prevented your daughter from completing school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think was the main reason for her dropout? • What other barriers were there to prevent your daughter from attending school? • Can teachers or the school be part of the reason to drop-out? • Did she feel safe at school? • How far was it for her to go to school? • Walking, by bus, or other means? • Do you think the government's plan is not supportive?
	What things could have helped your daughter complete her school education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further support could the family have given? • Easier access to school or easier travel? • More positive perceptions of usefulness of school to girls by your daughter? • Any positive factors within school?
School Factors	What kind of support do you expect from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the teachers and head teacher show any concern when your daughter stopped going to school? • What do you think they said to your daughter? • Did the school make allowances in the subjects your daughter found difficult? • Was your daughter worried too much about examinations? • Or worried about anything else? • Does the school have a library and other independent study facilities?

Theme	Main Question	Probe Questions
Ideas about intervention	Tell me what would be the best way to prevent your daughter's drop-out from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think that you can send your daughter back to the school again? • What should be done to send your child back to the school? • Can school do something? • Should the government have plans about dropout children? What kind of plans, do you think, can help them?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any idea that would help prevent girls from dropping out from school? • Can you suggest any changes or improvements in school that may be helpful for daughters in continuing their schooling?
Any more remarks	Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other comments/insights/ questions you would like to share?

Appendix 3. 7 Survey Questionnaire

Data Protection

Although you are asked to write your background information, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research and all information will be written anonymously in the report.

Instructions

Please read and answer each question carefully. Answer these questions by putting a circle round the number you choose as your response or give a short answer in the space provided. All questions are to be answered by all participants except for the ones with specific instructions.

Section 1: Participation Confirmation

101. I have read and understood the information sheet.

1. Yes 2. No

You may stop here if you do not wish to continue your participation. By carrying on you are agreeing to take part in this survey.

Section 2: Personal Information

Please provide the following information.

201. Gender 1. Male 2. Female

202. Age (completed years): _____

203. Religion: _____

204. Language spoken at home: _____

205. Place of Living 1. Village 2. Municipality

206. Region 1. Terai 2. Hill 3. Mountain

207. What is the main source of income in your household?

1. Agriculture 2. Business 3. Office work 4. Daily labour
5. Remittance 6. Other (Please specify)

208. Is your household income good enough to provide subsistence for whole year?

1. Yes 2. No

209. Who is your household head (decision maker) ?

1. Grand father 2. Grand mother 3. Father 4. Mother 5. Brother
6. Sister 7. Sister-in-law

210. Which of the following categories do you belong to:

1. Student (go to 211) 2. Parent/ Guardian (go to 212 and 213) 3. Education Office Staff (go to section 3) 4. Teacher (go to 214) 5. Head Teacher (go to section 3) 6. None of them (Please specify)

211. If you are a student, which grade are you in? _____

212. If you are a parent/guardian, what is your educational background?

1. Illiterate 2. Self-literate at home (never attended school)
3. Primary education (primary 1-7) 3. Secondary education (secondary 8-12)
4. College/University level education (BA and above)

213. What is your profession?

1. Agriculture 2. Housewife 3. Business 4. Clerical 5. Managerial 6. Don't know

214. If you are a teacher, which subject do you teach? _____

Section 3 : Girl Students' Dropout: Perception and Indicators

301. Has anyone in your family ever dropped out of school?

1. Yes 2. No

302. If Yes, what was the reason?

-

303. In your opinion, at which grade do most girls drop out?

1. Six 2. Seven 3. Eight 4. Nine 5. Ten 11. Don't know

304. In your opinion, which area has the cases of most dropout

1. Rural 2. Urban 3. Don't know

305. Which ethnic group do you think is more at risk of girl students' dropout?

1. Madhesi 2. Brahmin/Chhetri 3. Aboriginal/Janajati 4. Dalit 5. Don't know

306. Religious background and caste have an effect on girl students school retention.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

307. Male students should continue their studies but it's OK for girls to discontinue.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

308. Menstruating girls should stop going to school.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

309. A girl's job should be to look after children and family, why should she study?

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

310. Girls are married into other family, education for them is not necessary.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

311. Formal employment only suits boys, so girls' education is not useful.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

312. It is a student's choice to dropout, and the school and parents have nothing to do with it.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

Section 4: School system, educational policy, and curriculum

401. What is the average class size in the high schools in your area?

1. 20 students or fewer 2. 21-40 students 3. 31-60 students
4. 61-80 students 5. More than 80 students 6. Don't know

402. In general, how many students fail the examinations and repeat the same grade?

1. Below 5 2. 6-10 students 3. 11-15 students
4. 16-20 students 5. Don't know

Please circle the correct number against each statement below:

403. Male teachers care more about boys in the classrooms and at school.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

404. The schools suffer the lack of funding and cannot maintain girls-friendly

environment.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
405. The schools do not have separate toilets for boys and girls and it is difficult for girls to maintain their privacy.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
406. Generally, girls study performance is not as good as the boys.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
407. The schools do not provide extra support to the low performing students.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
408. Girls do not feel comfortable to share their personal problems with teachers.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
409. Students find the prescribed texts too difficult.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
410. Schools do not organise instruction differently for students with different abilities.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
411. The schools do not contact the parents of the girls who seem to be at risk of dropout to discuss the possible solutions to the problem.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
412. Girl students drop out because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know
413. Most schools in the district do not have a library and other independent study facilities.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree 5. Don't know

Section 5: Your Opinion and Suggestion

Please choose the best answer to the following questions:

501. Please choose three most important reasons for girls' drop out from high schools or give your own answer.

1. Because male household heads make the household decision 2. Parents believe that boys support them in their old age and boys have priority over girls' schooling
3. School environment is not favourable to girls and girls cannot share their health-related problems to teachers 4. Teachers pay attention to boys only 5. Grade promotion is based on written examination, if failed once girl students have to face the risk of dropout
6. Government's educational policy does not address the issue of gender equality in school educational outcome 7. Poverty is the root cause of dropout. 8. Other (please specify)

502. What are the three most important things the schools should do to help girl students to graduate successfully?

1. The school should not only focus on enrolment of girls and boys, but also on retention. 2. The school should remain in touch with parents regularly to find if they have any problem in sending their children to school. 3. The school should assign a female teacher to help girls with their health-related problems. 4. The school should promote continuous assessment system rather than pen and paper examinations. 5. The school should have separate toilets for boys and girls. 6. The school should provide additional support to low performing students. 7. The school should organise programmes from time to

time to raise parents' awareness towards the importance of female education

8. Other (please specify)

503. In your opinion, what three things should the government do to prevent girl students from dropping out?

1. The government should organise awareness programmes focused on female education in rural and urban areas
2. Should provide special incentive or award to the schools that have the best female student retention rates in the districts.
3. Should make sure that the schools have required resources and required number of teaching staff.
4. Should ensure that there are sufficient number of schools in a district so the students do not need to walk/travel too far from home.
5. There should be enough number of scholarships and incentives available to poor families.
6. Should make changes in policy about assessment systems.
7. The teachers should be provided trainings from time to time
8. Other (please specify)

Thank you very much for completing this survey.

Appendix 3. 8 Male and Female Student District-wise Dropout Rates

Ministry of education consolidated report (MOE, 2011).

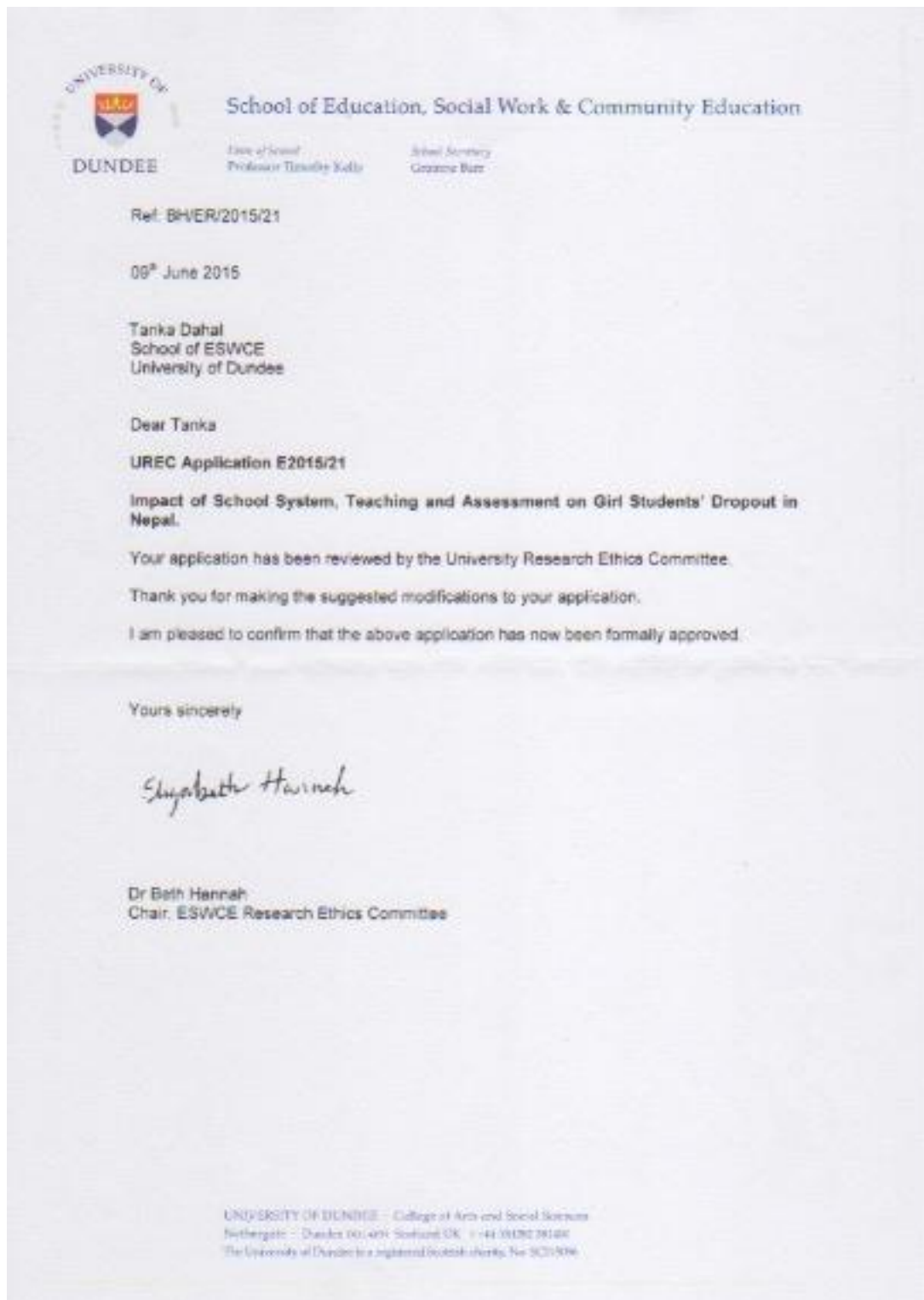
	Districts	Dropout Percent 6-10		Average dropout
		M	F	
Mountains				
Lowest	Sankhuwasabha	8.0	7.1	7.55
Highest	Jumla	13.5	17.55	15.5
	Taplejung	9.8	8.2	9
	Solukhumbu	10.3	9.6	9.9
	Dolakha	10.2	7.3	8.7
	Sindhupalchok	9.2	7.2	8.2
	Rasuwa	11.6	10.6	11.1
	Manang	14.4	10.9	12.6
	Mustang	11.7	11.8	11.5
	Dolpa	10.5	12.9	11.7
	Kalikot	10.8	15.8	13.3
	Mugu	11.3	11	11.1
	Humla	12.2	14.7	13.4
	Bajura	10.4	15.3	12.8
	Bajhang	11.1	14.1	12.6
	Darchula	8.7	10.6	9.6

	Districts	Dropout Percent 6-10		Average dropout
		M	F	
Hills				
Lowest	Kathmandu	3.3	3.2	3.2
Highest	Achham	8.5	12.95	10.7
	Panchthar	5.2	7.6	6.4
	Ilam	5.6	9.5	7.5
	Dhankuta	5.6	8.6	7.1
	Terhathum	8.2	9.3	8.7
	Bhojpur	8.5	7.2	7.8
	Okhaldhunga	9.1	8.3	8.7
	Khotang	9.5	10.7	10.1
	Udaypur	4.5	4.2	4.3
	Sindhuli	7.9	6.9	7.4
	Ramechhap	5.7	6.3	6
	Kavre	4	5.2	4.6
	Nuwakot	10.4	11.9	11.1
	Dhading	7.9	7.1	7.5
	Makwanpur	6.5	8	7.2
	Gorkha	7.5	8.5	8
	Lamjung	7.3	7.9	7.6
	Tanahu	5.4	6.2	5.8

	Syangja	5.9	5.9	5.9
	Kaski	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Myagdi	10.2	10.4	10.3
	Parbat	8.3	10	9.1
	Baglung	6.6	5	5.8
	Gulmi	4.6	4	4.3
	Palpa	6	5.7	5.8
	Arghakhachi	7.1	7.1	7.1
	Puthan	11.8	12.1	11.9
	Rolpa	9.9	11.5	10.7
	Rukum	10.1	12.3	11.2
	Salyan	9.6	9.2	9.4
	Surkhet	9.8	8.2	9
	Dailekha	7.4	8.4	7.9
	Jajarkot	9.9	10.4	10.1
	Doti	11.6	12.3	11.9
	Dadeldhura	8.8	9.7	9.2
	Baitadi	6.4	6.6	6.5
	Lalitpur	6.3	8.6	7.4
	Bhaktapur	6.8	5.4	6.1

	Districts	Dropout Percent 6-10		Average dropout
		M	F	
Terai				
Lowest	Jhapa	4.2	3.25	3.7
Highest	Rautahat	13.5	17.9	15.7
	Morang	4.3	5.6	4.9
	Sunsari	5.6	7.6	6.6
	Saptari	10.2	11.5	10.8
	Siraha	8.5	9.5	9
	Dhanusa	10.5	11.8	11.1
	Mahottari	12.2	14.5	13.3
	Sarlahi	10.4	12.8	11.6
	Bara	8.2	9.3	8.7
	Parsa	10.7	15.7	13.2
	Chitwan	5.3	5.5	5.4
	Nawalparasi	4.2	6	5.1
	Rupandehi	5	6.4	5.7
	Kapilbastu	8.2	9.4	8.8
	Dang	5.3	8	6.6
	Banke	5.5	6.8	6.1
	Bardiya	5	5	5
	Kailali	4.1	5.9	5
	Kanchanpur	7.1	7.7	7.4

Appendix 3. 9 Ethical Permission: University of Dundee



Appendix 3. 10 Participant Information Sheet

Study: *Impact of School System, Teaching and Assessment on Girl Students' Dropout in Nepal*

You are being asked to take part in a research study, which attempts to find how the school system and educational policy affect female students' dropout from high schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors related to school system and government policy that are responsible for female students' dropout. The study will help gaining an in-depth understanding of the process and causes of dropout of female students out of schools in Nepal.

Your participation in this research would benefit all high school female students all over Nepal. This will also benefit the female students in the developing countries in different parts of the world.

Time Commitment

This study will require 30 minutes (may exceed if required) for interview with you and will be one session. The meeting will be arranged in your convenient place, which may be one of the school classrooms, your home or school library.

Cost or Remuneration

Your participation in this study will be voluntary.

Risks

There are no known risks for you in this study.

Termination of Participation

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation and without penalty. You may decide not to be part of the study even after the interview is over if you feel uncomfortable about the opinions you expressed during the interview.

Confidentiality/Anonymity

- The data collected do not contain any personal information about you.
- No one will be able to link the data you provided to your identity and name.
- The data will be seen only by the researcher and will not be made available to anyone else.

- The questionnaires will be kept for 3 years after which time the files will be destroyed.
- The audio recordings will be kept until the final thesis is completed, after which time they will be destroyed.
- This study will be submitted to University of Dundee, School of Education, Social Work and Community Education. This may be available in the open access library catalogue.

Further Information about this Research Study

The researcher, Mr Tanka Dahal, will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact him at his email address t.p.dahal@dundee.ac.uk. If you wish to find about the final results of this study, you should email the researcher or contact School of Education, Social Work and Community Education, University of Dundee, Nethergate, DD1 4HN.

Appendix 3. 11 Participant Consent Form

Study Topic: *Impact of School System, Teaching and Assessment on Girl Students' Dropout in Nepal*

This study will aim to know the factors related to school system and government policy that may cause girls to stop going to school.

Your participation in this research will benefit all high school female students all over Nepal. This will also benefit female students in different parts of the world.

By signing below, you indicate that you know what this study is about and you agree to take part in this research study.

However, you may decide not to participate at any time without explanation and without penalty. You may decide this even after the interview is over if you feel uncomfortable about what you said during the interview.

Participant's signature

Date

Participant's Name

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date

Name of person obtaining consent

"I agree to the use of anonymous extracts from my interview in conference papers and articles"

YES ☐ NO ☐

"I agree to the audio recording of the interview"

YES ☐ NO ☐

Appendix 3. 12 Interview Transcripts: Inter-rater Reliability Check

Interview 1 (Female DEO Staff) : Transcript done by the researcher

1. DEO Staff (Female)

Job Position: Kharidar (Office Assistant), Formerly a Teacher

Qualification: Bachelor's Degree

Responsibilities: I have register all the incoming and outgoing letters. Other day to day administrative work. I have to carry out work provided by the section officers and the DEO. I was a teacher before I came to the education office. I taught in primary level pupils. Education is important for everyone.

I did my schooling in Tatopani; the school was Himsikhar Higher Secondary School. Later I moved to Jumla as a teacher. I continued my education as I was also teaching. I obtained my Bachelor's degree from Jumla Multiple college.

2. Compared to the past, there are more females going to school. The enrolment is good these days. In public schools there are more girls than boys. When I was at school there used to be many boys and only a few girls. It's not like that today. But the problem of dropout is still there.

3. Among main reasons are family conditions, poor economic status of the family, getting married before reaching proper age especially under peer-influence? Although there are more girls in schools, those continuing up to college level are less. The main reason is most of the girls get married by then and have children. Then there's no way they can get on with their study.

Positive things are: Improved people's awareness, change in education policy for better outcome.

4. We can often hear about the role of schools, it's in the news, the incidents of rape.. the incidents of male teachers sexually exploiting girl students, the incident of girls committing suicide etc, in other districts, but this has not happened in our district.

And, yes, there's also an influence of examination. Some girls once they fail the exam, feel hesitant to repeat the same grade, they do not feel like going to school, and they eventually quit.

The distance between home and school is also a trouble. Here at the centre, bazaar area, the schools are near, but I've seen schools at the remote places of this district where students have to walk up to one hour or even one and half hour. In that case the boys and girls in their teens may develop relation on their way to school and back, and quit schools.

Some girls quit schools just for security reasons because parents think that it is unsafe for the girls in teens walking such a long distance. As they have heard the news of rape and girls trafficking.

The teacher student ratio in high schools is a problem. Every village development committee (VDC) must have a high school and every ward a primary school. This is the government policy which is not in practice in many places that is why some

students travel that distance. As the primary school students move to secondary, the secondary schools have too many students for the teachers available. The government has not created new positions for years. It has created chaotic classrooms. The weaker students suffer and may drop out ultimately.

5. I think the current policy has tried its best to encourage girls to go to schools. There are scholarships, there are enrolment campaigns. Quite a few good programmes, like school lunch facility in some districts, nutrition allowance for primary level children, scholarships for the disabled children, children from *dalit* caste groups.

The problem is in provision of teachers. There are not enough number of *darbandis* (permanent teachers' positions) required for a high school. The education authority allows a primary school to upgrade to lower secondary, a lower secondary to upgrade to secondary. But they do not create teaching positions. So, the teachers with primary level teaching skills and qualifications teach in higher grades. That impacts the quality of teaching.

6. Family has crucial role: but it all depends on whether the family have good financial condition, or the family members have some education. I can see change in people's attitudes. They think they need to educate their children, both boys and girls. However, when they have to choose between son and daughter for education, they go for sons. The age-old bias.

The schools should try to improve the quality of teaching, ensure safe school environment, no corporal punishment, toilet facilities in all schools (most schools have separate toilets now, but some schools still lack this facility), clean drinking water.

So far as the bringing the dropout students back to school goes, it may be possible in case of young children, suppose those of primary grades, but it is difficult for the grown-up ones. The girls mostly get married and have children. They also have household responsibilities. There are barriers from their husband's family too. They find it inappropriate if their daughter-in-law goes to school.

If school teachers and parents have a common effort, they can do a lot. The girls and boys themselves should also be conscious, they should realise the value of education. They should think about their future.

Interview 1 (Female DEO Staff) : Transcript done by the second translator

About Yourself

Position: Kharidar

Responsibilities in Office: I am an administrative staff. Especially I do registration (Darta), Chalani and other responsibilities provided by officers.

Prior duties before this position: I was a school teacher. I had taught at primary level (1-5th grade).

Educational Level: Bachelor.

I went to Himsikhar Higher School, Tatopani for School level education and studied in Jumla Multiple College, Jumla up to Bachelor degree. To me education is very important for both boys and girls.

Drop Out Status and Reasons of Dropout

Compared to the past, the school going female population has been increasing. Due to the poor economic status and household environment (like gender discrimination in education), girls drop out from the school. The tradition of early marriage is also existed which is also a reason of school drop out of girls. The main reasons of drop out are poverty, early marriage. Nevertheless, the knowledge of "should study" has increased among girls. Now a days, female population is higher than the male population in schools.

Girls marry at early age and give birth to the baby soon after marriage. Again, they did not have the opportunity of education in their parents' home, the education in husband's home after marriage is impossible. All of the family may not have educated. Due to the baby, it increases the responsibilities of female. So the education stops. Girls' enrolment is high but only a few girls are reached at college level.

Good thing is that more people are now conscious about education and the government has also brought new changes in policy.

Do you see any effect of school for girls drop out?

News is being broadcasting some weakness of schools like rape in school, teachers' negative attitude towards girls' student. But no any negative events found in Jumla districts till the date.

After failed in exam, girls do not want to go to school due to shyness, then get marry. Examination system is also a cause of dropout of girls from school.

Within this valley, children reach school in around half an hour but in remote places it takes about 1 hr to 1.5 hours. Distance may also affects students. Some boys and girls fall in love when walking up and down from school. Security is the main thing for girls when they have to walk long distance. Parents begin to be worried about grown daughters as there are news of girls being tempted and taken to India for prostitution and news of rape. This also has effect on leaving school.

Every ward should have a primary schools and every VDC a secondary level schools. This is in the policy. But this has not happened in all the VDC's and wards. No. of students is too large in Secondary level school because after the completion of primary and lower secondary level, they reach at secondary level. It do not meet needed student teacher ratio (or student teacher ratio is high). Governments do not add the new *Darbandi* (teaching position). Those who are poor do not get help from teachers and drop out.

Role of education policy

Education policy has a very good role. The new things in the policy is positive for encouragement especially for girls. It has been helping to enrolled at school for out of school children. For this, different school admission program has been implemented. The school lunch programs, scholarship for girls, fund for nutrition have attracted more children.

I think there are not enough teachers in majority of schools. Primary level school has upgraded to lower secondary level and lower secondary level school has upgraded to

secondary level. But the number of teachers have not been increased than the prior level. In this case, Primary level teacher teaches up to lower secondary level and lower secondary level teacher teaches up to secondary level. Only old secondary level schools have enough government teachers. Almost all new school may not have enough teachers.

What can help girls do to complete school?

For better education of girls, family has to be educated, they should have economically viable. Family environment should be conducive for girls' education.

Generally people awareness level, towards girl education, has increased. The concept "education for both son and daughter" has increased. However, girl is automatically backwards due to the family environment and their old beliefs. They prefer sons to have education if they have to decide on only one because of family problems.

According to the education policy, every school should construct separate toilet facility for girls and boys. Teachers take same class for girl and boy students; but the level of understanding of teaching may different among the students. They should do everything they can do to make girls feel that they get good quality teaching and the school is a safe place.

But it is almost impossible to go back to school for the elder students after they drop out because they may already get married or they have children. Girls have to do housework. Their husband's parents do not want daughter-in-law going to school.

School and parents should work together to help girls. Girls and boys themselves also should feel motivated toward education and their future.

Interview 2 (Male Head Teacher): Transcript done by the Researcher

1. Qualification: BED, Agriculture

Responsibilities: Overall school Management; make sure the teachers class rota is working well; try to find solution for the problems when they arise, organise parents' meetings and be in touch with people in the community, school supervisors, resource persons and district education office.

I did my schooling in the same school where I'm head teacher now. Graduated from this school, went to Kathmandu, completed intermediate level education in Sanothimi Agriculture College, Bhaktapur. Then I was in government service. I got in-service paid leave to do bachelor's degree, which was done in Kirtipur. After that I came back to teach here. I have been teaching since 1976.

I became deputy head teacher 10 years ago. I have been in this position for 3 years. The head teacher took retirement and I got the promotion.

2. This school was established as a primary school in 1952. It was upgraded to lower secondary in 1957 and secondary in 1965. The government launched new education system in 1973 when this school adopted a vocational subject as Agriculture. This school was known as agriculture training school. Students got a number of practical lessons and trainings focusing on professional skills of

agriculture. When I was a student here I remember we produced chickens artificially. The subject had 400 marks in SLC. Later, with the change in policy, which happens every 10 years, we had to change also. Now we teach agriculture only one of the optional subjects with 100 marks.

Student number was huge before, it was the oldest school in the district and covered a large area, now there are a number of public and private schools, so students number has gone down.

Those parents who cannot send their children to the private school, enrol here in public schools. Our parents are from backward group, economically, in terms of education and social status. There is a dalit community here, most of the people from this community are poor and their children come to this school. The families who are a little better in terms of household economy, send their sons to private schools and daughters to public schools. For this reason also the number of girls in public school is more than those of boys.

Almost all conscious and well-to-do guardians/parents send their children to private schools.

3. There is no drop out in our school now. Some students who stop coming to school after an academic year ends and they do not take the transfer certificates. They may have dropped out, but we are not sure they are. The reason is some private schools take students without any kind of certificate. The cases of such students is very few among boy students. In the past there used to be a lot of dropouts, especially girls. But now we have found that some girls come to school even after they get married.

We update the record once a year, we need to provide scholarship to girls, we need to provide money to buy the textbooks. We must check their attendance and continuity. Normally the budget is provided once a year. And sometimes they also provide in two instalments. In that case we distribute two times.

4. Main reasons are economic and work culture in the family. One person works, one person earns to feed the family of seven. They want to catch up with the demand of the time, gas stove at home, other fashionable gadgets such as TV and mobile phones. For that reason also they put their grown up daughters to daily wages. Marriage used to be one reason. But it is not so these days. Girls marry, but they keep coming to school. I have some students here who have married but continued their schooling.

Most of the dropouts occur in *dalit* community. The reason is parents' level of consciousness and economic background. Parents are responsible for this.

5. The school factors are less to be blamed. There are choices of schools, they can go to other schools if they do not like our school. We call parents of those students who fail, three times, four times. Parents do not turn up. We wanted to give students a chance to reseat, have a consultation with parents, but parents do not come.

6. I do not believe that girls or boys drop out because they fail the examinations. They repeat the grade but do not dropout. There are choices available: if a student does not want to study in this school, there are other schools available. They can go there.

The policy has aimed to encourage economically backward people and females by providing scholarships. This is positive side. Provision of scholarship is positive but there's very weak monitoring. Such a huge amount has been invested, but there isn't a mechanism to see if this is working properly, if the parents who receive the funds for their daughters are investing on their daughters' education.

School education should be directed towards developing some vocational skills in students so that once the students graduate from high schools, they can do something and live on their own. The current system makes students to find job either in the government offices or in private sector. Because of this unemployment rate of qualified girls and boys have gone up.

See, around 50% pass SLC. Then how many of them reach masters' level? Very less. The rest have to do something. If they gain some vocational skill, they would find a job for themselves. Girls would also be encouraged if they know that they will be able to do something on their own.

Another aspect that needs action is about teachers. There are teachers who have only school level education. They have been teaching in primary level for many years. Now the curriculum and educational policy has changed. The policy aims to switch the current method to English medium in primary level. Now it is hard for those teachers. The government should offer them a package and ask to retire. They should be replaced by fresh teachers.

7. Parental awareness toward education is essential; the government should plan to raise awareness conducting programmes from time to time. There should be a system of reward and punishment. The government should cut on the facility the nation provides to those who pull their daughters and sons out of school. It should be assessed if the situation is beyond parents' control. The system of reward and punishment will make parents responsible.

About scholarship, we do not have enough scholarships. We have at least 70/80 students who genuinely need scholarships but the quota we have is that of 40 or 50. So some of the needy children do not get it. There should be more quota and the amount should be raised.

The government should have a system to assess the effective implementation of the scholarship. There should be somebody trying to find if parents invest the money in right way and if there is any misuse of it. For instance, I've seen some parents who go to drink on the day they receive their daughters' scholarship amount. And there are parents who purchase food and stuff on credit telling the shopkeeper that they would clear the dues once the amount of their daughters' scholarship comes.

The government should put restriction on marriage registration. Marriage should be registered only of those who have completed certain level of education. That would make parents aware of the need of education for their children.

Interview 2 (Male Head Teacher): Transcript done by the second Translator

About Yourself

Since 2033 BS (since 1976- Or since about 39 years).

Up to secondary level, I studied in this school. Intermediate level was taken from Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur. I started a Nepal government job. I got in-service employee paid leave to do Bachelor's degree from Kirtipur.

I was school teacher in this school. I was a deputy head for about 10 years. After the retirement of the head teacher, I became head teacher.

Period of Head Teacher: 3 years. Responsibilities: Supervise teachers class schedules to check if it is working effectively, and take care of school management as a whole. Deal with problems. Meet parents and visitors. Have a regular contact with the DEO, resource persons, school supervisors and community people.

Please give me some information of this school

It was a primary school in 2009BS. In 2013BS, it was developed as lower secondary level. Since 2014BS, it was developed as government secondary level school. After the implementation of new education system/policy in 2028, it was developed as professional high school of agriculture. The subject had the weight of 400 marks. Students got a range of agricultural skills-based training. When I was a student here we produced chickens artificially. In every 10 years, the education policy has been changing. Now a day, we are teaching agriculture as an optional subject of 100 total marks only due to the change of education policy.

Number of students, before and now days, in school

Students were large in number due to an oldest school of the district. But after the establishment of other government school in every VDC and the establishment of private school, the no. of students was reduced.

Kind of people who send their children in Private school and Government School

The people who cannot afford the cost of private school have send their children to government school. For example, there is one Dalit settlement. They are poor and their children are at our school. And those who are a little better economically, especially daughters are sent to our school and sons to the private schools. This reason has increases the female students in our school.

The parents of this school are only poor, uneducated, back warded and traditional. They do not visit in school to understand the educational status of their children. Before we call them to discuss the result of their children but nobody visit in school.

Those who are economically sound, educated, conscious are sending their children to private schools.

Dropouts at School

No dropouts now. Those who do not take the certificates may have dropped out but we cannot say clearly. There are some schools that accept students without any certificate, strange. Very few of this type of case may be at school, especially in boys. Few years back, there had been many dropout case of girl but now daughter attends in school after marriage too. So, the dropout case has reduced now days.

Does school monitor dropout every year or not?

We have been monitoring every year at the time of distribution of scholarships.

How many times distribute scholarship in a year?

Generally, One time. If the budget provided at two times, we will also distribute scholarships 2 times. So, it depends upon the budget.

Group/Caste/Ethnicity of Dropout students and the reason of dropout

The reason is economic and family work system. There is only one person from the family to work but the family has 7 people. If daughter have matured, they have to go for wage labour. They have to have modern gadgets at home, such as TV, gas stove and mobile phones. So, the main reason of dropout is economic deprivation or poverty and low level of consciousness towards education. Mostly this happens among Dalits. Parents are especially responsible of dropout of their son/daughter from school.

Role of examination system in dropout of students from school

No. Students have also repeated in same class if they failed in exam. They do not drop out. If they do not like to study in this school, they find other schools. We want to discuss the student's exam performance with parents and call them 3 or 4 times, but they do not come.

Positive and Negative aspect of current education policy

The existing policy only teaches for seeking job either in public service commission or in private sector. This is the weak side of the policy. It has increased unemployment for young girls/boys. Hence, the education policy should incorporate professional/vocational course in education instead of current theoretical educational courses. Actually, very few students continue up to Masters level after so many of them (nearly 50%) get through the SLC. So, all of them should find a job or something to do. If they get a skill-based education, they can be self-employed. Girls will also be encouraged if they see that they can do something for themselves.

Scholarships for girls are the strength of the policy. It encourages girls and poor people. However, weak monitoring side of program implementation is the negative aspect of the policy. There is a big amount of budget going on scholarship. But there is nothing that check and see if the parents spending that money on their daughter's education.

Only SLC completed teachers are teaching in lower grade. Hence, the quality of teacher is primary concern. It is necessary to provide sufficient training for those teachers with change

in new syllabus. Those very old teachers, the government should bring a retirement package so that they will retire and new teachers come to those positions.

Opinion towards efforts to stop dropout of students

The parental awareness is important. The government should raise parents' awareness toward education. There should be programme on regular basis. These efforts should be implement by government i.e. reward and punishment. If the parents do not motivate to go school for their daughters as well as sons, government should stop to provide state facilities for those parents. They should try to find if the situation was under control and out of their control. It will make responsible to parents for children education.

Scholarships

The quota of scholarship is not sufficient to provide to all needy girls. We get 40/50 scholarships but we have 70 or 80 needy girls. The number of scholarship and amount of it should be more.

Government should also monitor to this program for its effective implementation and its result. Again, it is also necessary to monitor the uses and misuses of scholarships amount by the students and parents too. I give you an example, I see it sometimes. Some parents go to Bhatti (liquor shop) to drink when they receive daughters' scholarship money. Some parents purchase goods on credit from the shop promising to pay after daughters get the amount from school.

Academic qualification can also be declared for the registration of marriage. If s/he has not completed required grade/class, policy can declare that s/he will not be eligible for the registration of marriage. That way parents will be aware.

Appendix 6.1. 1 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Rautahat	80	83.05	6644.00
	Kathmandu	85	82.95	7051.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				3396.000
Z				7051.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.989

Appendix 6.1. 2 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Rautahat	80	80.40	6432.00
	Sankhuwasabha	82	82.57	6771.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				3192.000
Z				-.314
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.754

Appendix 6.1. 3 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Rautahat	80	74.28	5942.00
	Jumla	80	86.72	6938.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				2702.000
Z				-1.806
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.071

Appendix 6.1. 4 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Rautahat	80	74.92	5994.00
	Rolpa	77	83.23	6409.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2754.000		
Z		-1.223		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.221		

Appendix 6.1. 5 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Jhapa	73	79.49	5802.50
	Jumla	80	74.73	5978.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2738.500		
Z		-.711		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.477		

Appendix 6.1. 6 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Jhapa	73	80.69	5890.50
	Rolpa	77	70.58	5434.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2431.500		
Z		-1.545		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.122		

Appendix 6.1. 7 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Kathmandu	85	82.68	7027.50
	Sankhuwasabha	82	85.37	7000.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		3372.500		
Z		-.387		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.698		

Appendix 6.1. 8 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Kathmandu	85	76.47	6500.00
	Jumla	80	89.94	7195.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2845.000		
Z		-1.945		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.052		

Appendix 6.1. 9 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Kathmandu	85	77.05	6549.50
	Rolpa	77	86.41	6653.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2894.500		
Z		-1.370		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.171		

Appendix 6.1. 10 Chapter 6.4.4b : Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Sankhuwasabha	82	76.04	6235.5
	Jumla	80	87.09	6967.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2832.500		
Z		-1.601		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.109		

Appendix 6.1. 11 Chapter 6.4.4b: Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Sankhuwasabha	82	76.84	6301.00
	Rolpa	77	83.36	6419.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2898.000		
Z		-.960		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.337		

Appendix 6.1. 12 Chapter 6.4.4b Mann-Whitney Test: District of Residence

	Districts	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Schools Cannot Have Girls Friendly Environment Because of Lack of Government's Funding	Jumla	80	81.32	6506.00
	Rolpa	77	76.58	5897.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		2894.000		
Z		-.701		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.483		

Appendix 6.2. 1 Chapter 6.4.5a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Region of Residence

		Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank
Lack of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys in Schools Causes Difficulty to Girls		Terai	175	261.08
		Hill	185	268.28
		Mountain	173	271.62
Test Statistics ^{a,b}				
Chi-Square				.473
df				2
Asymp. Sig.				.789

Appendix 6.2. 2 Chapter 6.4.5a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participants Category

		Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
Lack of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys in Schools Causes Difficulty to Girls		Student	447	263.41
		Parents	27	284.11
		DEO Staff	30	292.62
		Teacher	29	279.93
		Total	533	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}				
Chi-Square				1.783
df				3
Asymp. Sig.				.619

Appendix 6.2. 3 Chapter 6.4.5a Mann-Whitney Test: Male and Female Respondents

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Lack of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys in Schools Causes Difficulty to Girls	Male	258	270.69	69839.00
	Female	275	263.53	72472.00
Test Statistics ^a				
Mann-Whitney U	34522.000			
Z	-.564			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.573			

Appendix 6.2. 4 Chapter 6.4.5a Kruskal-Wallis Test: District Locations

	District of Survey	N	Mean Rank
Lack of Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys in Schools Causes Difficulty to Girls	Rautahat	91	245.41
	Jhapa	84	278.05
	Kathmandu	93	252.26
	Sankhuwasabha	88	278.45
	Jumla	85	264.55
	Rolpa	92	284.47
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	5.275		
df	5		
Asymp. Sig.	.383		

Appendix 6.3. 1 Chapter 6.4.6a Mann-Whitney Test Results: Students Vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	448	236.64	106016.50
	Teachers	29	275.40	7986.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U		5440.500		
Z		-1.551		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.121		

Appendix 6.3. 2 Chapter 6.4.6a Mann-Whitney Test Results: Students Vs Parents

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Students	448	239.47	107283.00
	Parents	27	213.59	5767.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U		5389.000		
Z		-1.007		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.314		

Appendix 6.3. 3 Chapter 6.4.6a Mann-Whitney Test Results: DEO Staff Vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	DEO Staff	29	30.79	893.00
	Teachers	29	28.21	818.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U				383.000
Z				-.666
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.505

Appendix 6.4. 1 Chapter 6.4.7a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Categories

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Student	445	267.73
	Parents	27	249.89
	DEO Staff	28	220.80
	Teacher	28	270.89
	Total	528	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square			3.212
df			3
Asymp. Sig.			.360

Appendix 6.4. 2 Chapter 6.4.7a Mann-Whitney Test: Male Vs Female

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Male	257	255.85	65754.50
	Female	271	272.70	73901.50
	Total	528		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U				32601.500
Z				-1.360
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.174

Appendix 6.4. 3 Chapter 6.4.7a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Region of Residence

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Terai	175	250.99
	Hill	175	272.30
	Mountain	178	270.12
	Total	528	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	2.383		
df	2		
Asymp. Sig.	.304		

Chapter 6.4.7a Chapter 6.4.7a Kruskal-Wallis Test: District Locations

	District of Survey	N	Mean Rank
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Rautahat	89	222.61
	Jhapa	86	280.35
	Kathmandu	91	264.48
	Sankhuwasabha	88	264.72
	Jumla	90	275.40
	Rolpa	84	280.77
	Total	528	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	10.411		
df	5		
Asymp. Sig.	.064		

Appendix 6.5. 1 Chapter 6.4.8a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Categories

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
School Does Not Provide Extra Teaching Support for Low Performing Students	Student	450	273.84
	Parents	27	260.28
	DEO Staff	30	253.12
	Teacher	29	209.21
	Total	536	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	6.819		
df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.078		

Appendix 6.5. 2 Chapter 6.4.8a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	Students	450	239.72	107872.00
	Parents	27	227.07	6131.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		5753.000		
Z		-.526		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.599		

Appendix 6.5. 3 Chapter 6.4.8a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	Students	450	241.68	108754.00
	DEO Staff	30	222.87	6686.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		6221.000		
Z		-.815		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.415		

Appendix 6.5. 4 Chapter 6.4.8a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	Parents	27	29.46	795.50
	DEO Staff	30	28.58	857.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		392.500		
Z		-.291		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.771		

Appendix 6.5. 5 Chapter 6.4.8a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls Cannot Share their Personal Problems with Teachers	DEO Staff	30	32.67	980.00
	Teachers	29	27.24	790.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				355.000
Z				-1.636
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.102

Appendix 6.6. 1 Chapter 6.4.9a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Category

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Student	411	242.51
	Parents	23	212.67
	DEO Staff	28	294.62
	Teacher	28	267.25
	Total	490	
Test Statistics ^{a,b}			
Chi-Square			7.058
df			3
Asymp. Sig.			.070

Appendix 6.6. 2 Chapter 6.4.9a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Students	411	218.88	89958.50
	Parents	23	192.89	4436.50
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U				4160.500
Z				-1.086
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)				.278

Appendix 6.6. 3 Chapter 6.4.9a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Students	411	218.58	89838.00
	Teachers	28	240.79	6742.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		5172.000		
Z		-1.012		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.312		

Appendix 6.6. 4 Chapter 6.4.9a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	Parents	23	22.70	522.00
	Teachers	28	28.71	804.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		246.000		
Z		-1.687		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.092		

Appendix 6.6. 5Chapter 6.4.9a Mann-Whitney Test: Respondents' Category

	Respondents' Category	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
The Text Books are too Challenging for Students	DEO Staff	28	30.25	847.00
	Teachers	28	26.75	749.00
Test Statistics				
Mann-Whitney U		343.000		
Z		-1.121		
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.262		

Appendix 6.7. 1 Chapter 6.4.11a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Category

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue	Student	408	249.88
	Parents	27	239.24
	DEO Staff	30	201.87
	Teacher	29	268.90
	Total	494	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	4.676		
df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.197		

Appendix 6.7. 2 Chapter 6.4.11a Mann-Whitney Test: Students vs Parents

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue	Students	408	218.59	89186.00
	Parents	27	209.04	5644.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	5266.000			
Z	-.415			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.678			

Appendix 6.7. 3 Chapter 6.4.11a Mann-Whitney Test: Students vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the Issue	Students	408	222.36	90724.00
	DEO Staff	30	180.57	5417.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	4952.000			
Z	-1.890			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.059			

Appendix 6.7. 4 Chapter 6.4.11a Mann-Whitney Test: Students vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the ssue	Students	408	217.93	88913.50
	Teachers	29	234.12	6789.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	5477.500			
Z	-.721			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.471			

Appendix 6.7. 5 Chapter 6.4.11a Mann-Whitney Test: Parents vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the ssue	Parents	27	31.74	857.00
	DEO Staff	30	26.53	796.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	331.000			
Z	-1.499			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.134			

Appendix 6.7. 6 Chapter 6.4.11a Mann-Whitney Test: Parents vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School Does not Invite Parents of Girls at Risk of Dropout to Discuss the ssue	Parents	27	26.46	714.50
	Teachers	29	30.40	881.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	336.500			
Z	-1.098			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.272			

Appendix 6.8. 1 Chapter 6.4.12a Mann-Whitney Test: Gender

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Male	256	265.63	68000.50
	Female	285	275.83	78610.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	35104.500			
Z	-.806			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.420			

Appendix 6.8. 2 Chapter 6.4.12a Kruskal-Wallis Test: Participant Category

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Student	454	273.85
	Parents	28	269.45
	DEO Staff	30	278.55
	Teacher	29	220.12
	Total	541	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
Chi-Square	3.730		
df	3		
Asymp. Sig.	.292		

Appendix 6.8. 3 Chapter 6.4.12a Mann-Whitney Test: Terai vs Hills

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Terai	175	183.45	32103.50
	Hills	183	175.72	32157.50
	Total	358		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	15321.500			
Z	-.750			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.453			

Appendix 6.8. 4 Chapter 6.4.12a Mann-Whitney Test: Hills vs Mountains

	Region of Residence	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Girls dropout because after failing the examinations parents do not want them to repeat the same grade	Hills	183	192.80	35282.00
	Mountains	183	174.20	31879.00
	Total	366		
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	15043.000			
Z	-1.789			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.074			

Appendix 6.9. 1 Chapter 6.4.13 Mann-Whitney Test: Students vs Parents

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Most schools in the district do not have a library and other independent study facilities.	Students	407	218.61	88972.50
	Parents	26	191.87	4988.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	4637.500			
Z	-1.147			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.251			

Appendix 6.9. 2 Chapter 6.4.13 Mann-Whitney Test: Parents vs DEO Staff

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Most schools in the district do not have a library and other independent study facilities.	Parents	26	30.77	800.00
	DEO Staff	30	26.53	796.00
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	331.000			
Z	-1.195			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.232			

Appendix 6.9. 3 Chapter 6.4.13 Mann-Whitney Test: Parents vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Most schools in the district do not have a library and other independent study facilities.	Parents	26	31.29	813.50
	Teachers	29	25.05	726.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	291.500			
Z	-1.737			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.082			

Appendix 6.9. 4 Chapter 6.4.13 Mann-Whitney Test: DEO Staff vs Teachers

	Respondents' Categories	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Most schools in the district do not have a library and other independent study facilities.	DEO Staff	30	31.28	938.50
	Teachers	29	28.67	831.50
Test Statistics^a				
Mann-Whitney U	396.500			
Z	-.735			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.462			